



JUSTICE LEAGUE<sup>®</sup>

27

SEPT 95

# TASK FORCE<sup>TM</sup>

**DESPERO<sup>TM</sup>**  
DON'T GET ON  
HIS *BAD* SIDE.

PRIEST  
BERNADO  
WALLACE  
CRAMER

...UH OH.  
**TOO LATE!**

JOHN VAUGHAN'S RIABER

--AND SO, IT'S OFFICIAL.  
HAVING BEEN GRANTED  
IMMUNITY FROM  
PROSECUTION IN THE HIT-  
AND-RUN DEATH OF NINE-  
YEAR-OLD BONITA PHILLIPS--

--EDDIE "TERMINATOR" SANABRIA,  
THE PROSECUTION'S STAR WITNESS  
AGAINST ALLEGED DRUG KINGPIN  
DANNY RIVERA, WAS SET FREE TODAY  
WHEN THE GOVERNMENT'S CASE  
AGAINST RIVERA CONCLUDED.

LOCAL CIVIL RIGHTS  
GROUPS ARE FLOODING  
THE MAYOR'S OFFICE  
WITH DEMANDS FOR  
JUSTICE FOR THE LITTLE  
PHILLIPS GIRL--

-- AN INNOCENT  
VICTIM OF VIOLENT  
CRIME. \*

A SPOKESMAN FROM THE  
QUEENS COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S  
OFFICE CALLED SANABRIA'S  
RELEASE "DISTURBING AND  
UNFORTUNATE."

\*SEE TRIUMPH#1  
FOR SUBSEQUENT  
DEVELOPMENTS  
IN THIS CASE.  
--ROO



I AM A  
CROOK.

HI,  
MA!

PROSECUTORS, BUOYED  
BY THEIR SPECTACULAR  
DISMANTLING OF  
DANNY RIVERA'S  
CRIMINAL EMPIRE,  
HAVE PLEDGED  
THEMSELVES TO GET  
SANABRIA OFF THE  
STREETS FOR GOOD.

WHAT  
PROSECUTORS ARE  
AT A LOSS TO SAY,  
THOUGH--



# PROLOGUE: MEANWHILE, DESPERO...

--IS  
HOW.

FOR 327 EARTH-YEARS  
L-RON HAS BEEN A  
SERVANT.

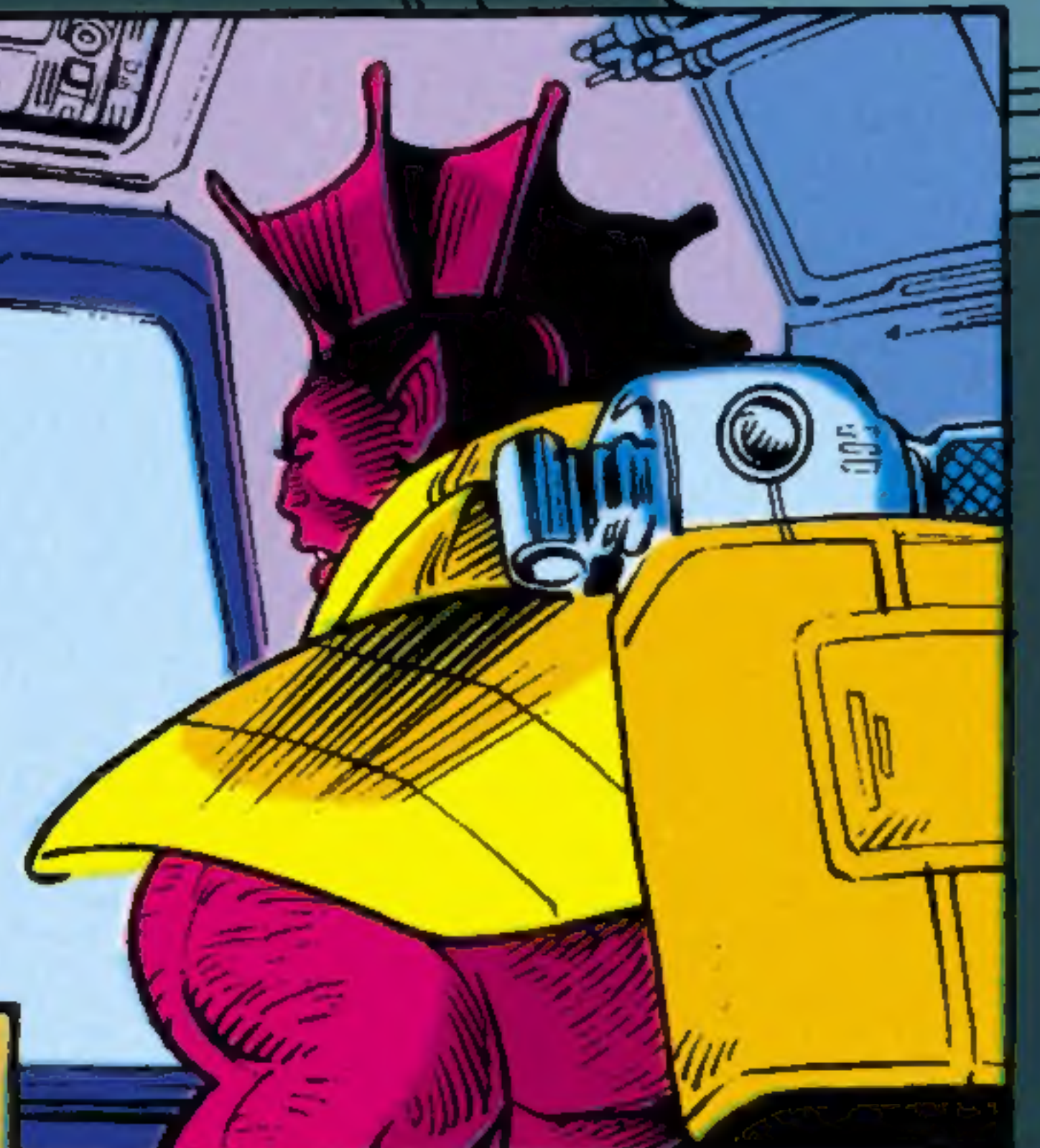
A SIMPLE, HUMBLE  
DROID CHARGED WITH  
DOING HIS MASTER'S  
BIDDING.

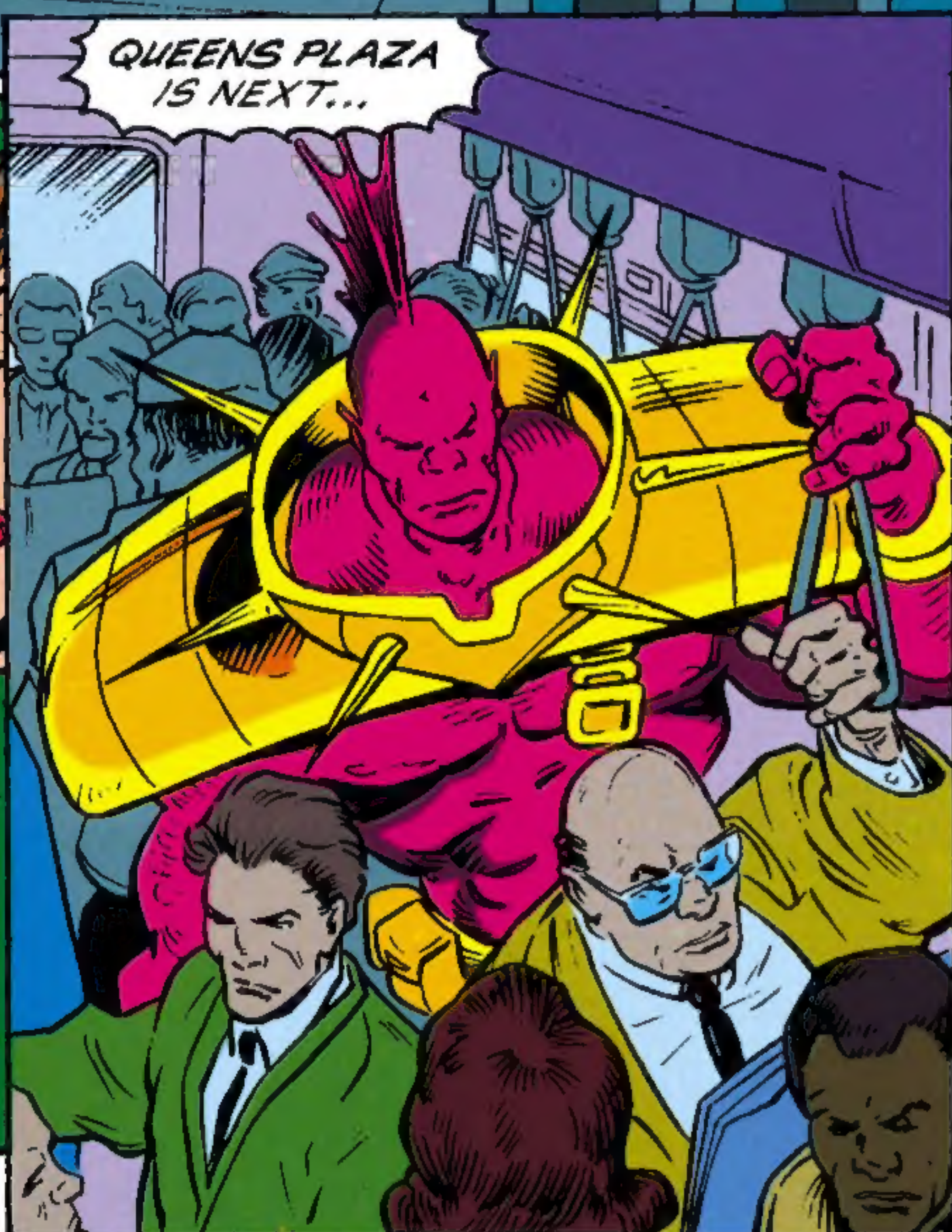
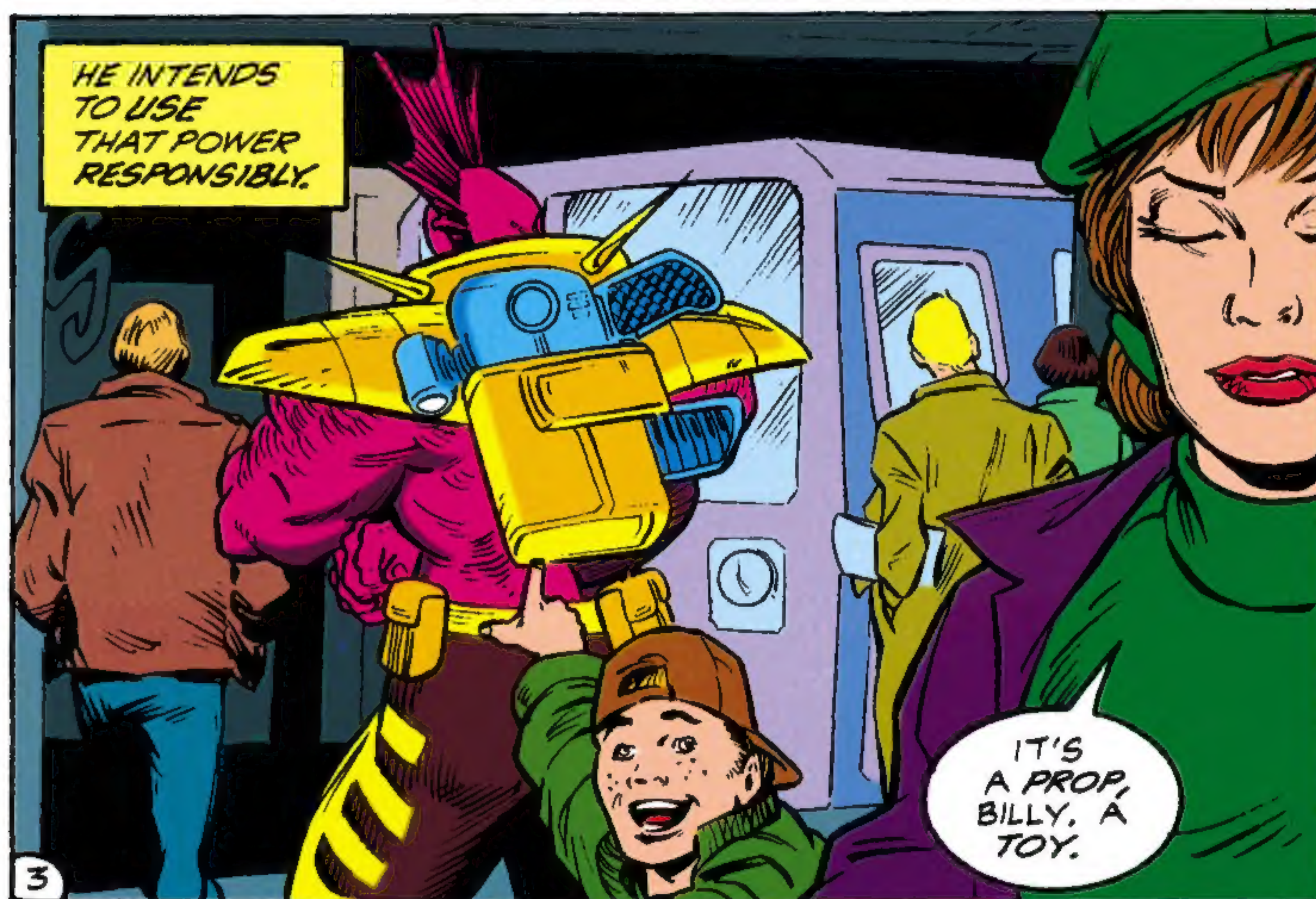
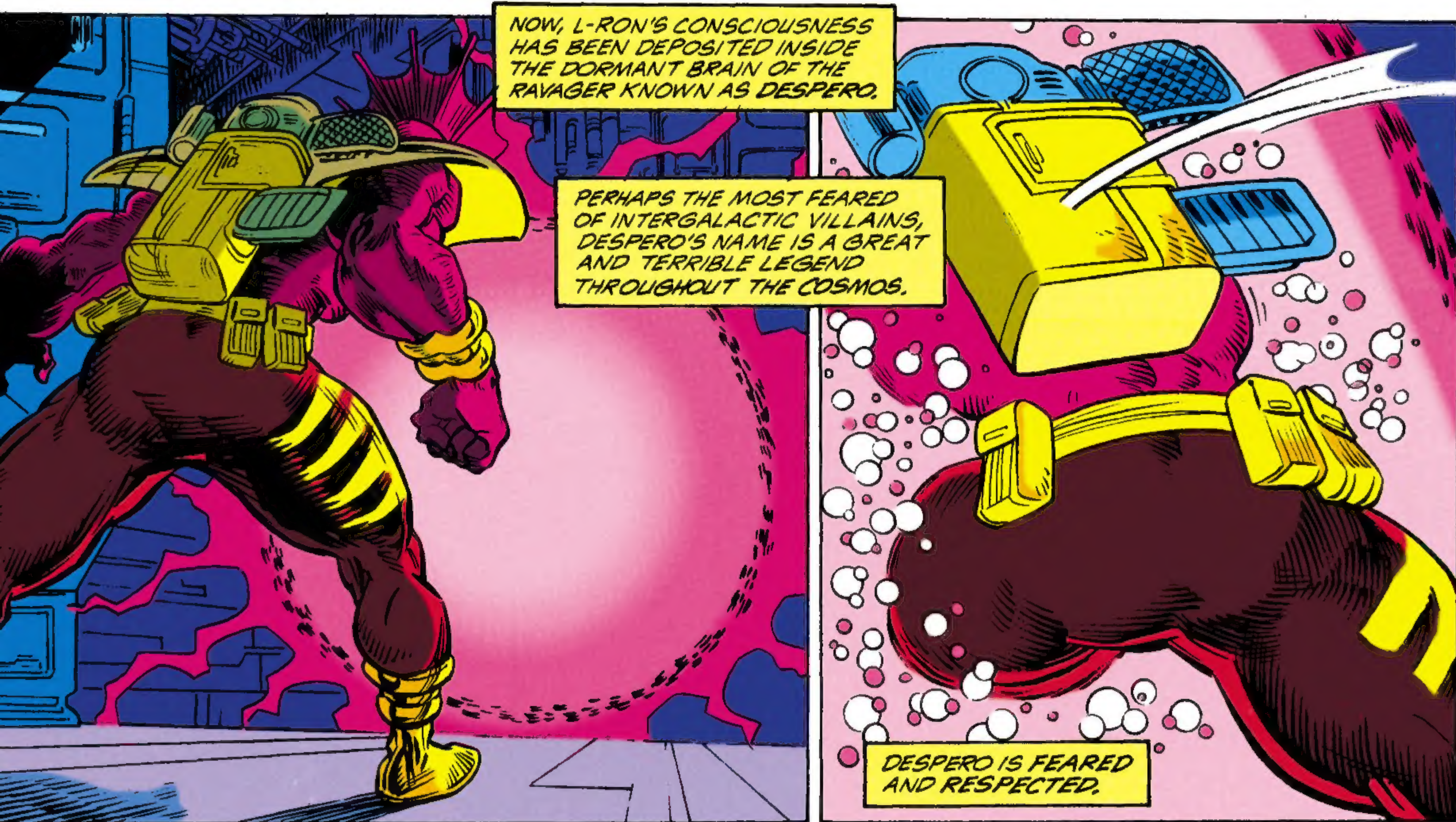
MORE THAN THREE  
CENTURIES SPENT  
SHINING SHOES...

...FETCHING  
DRINKS.

HIS DEMURE STATURE AND  
IGNOBLE CASING DESIGN  
RELEGATING HIM TO THE  
MOST MENIAL OF TASKS  
AND INVITING RIDICULE  
AND SCORN FROM ALL WHO  
KNEW HIM.

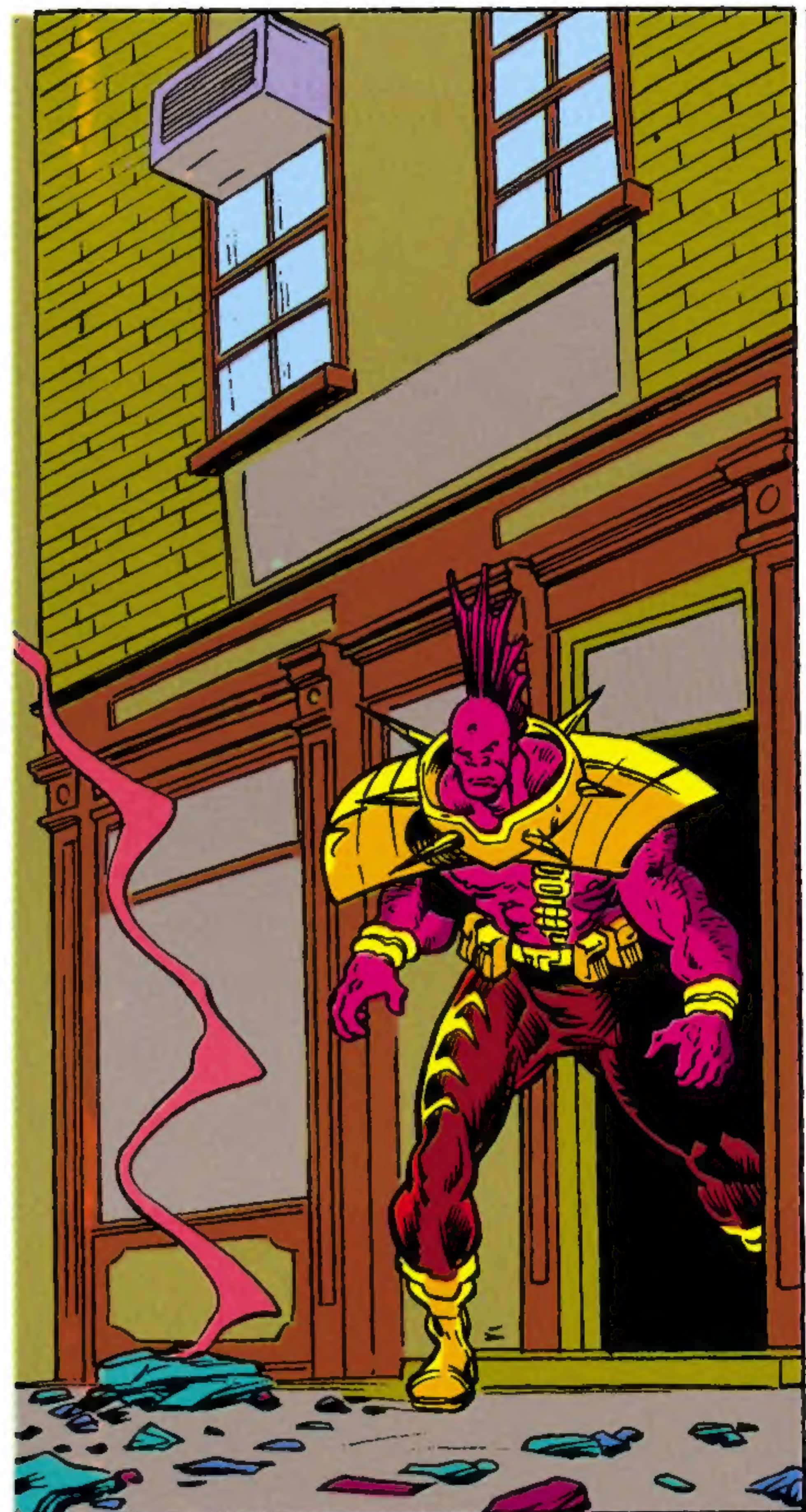
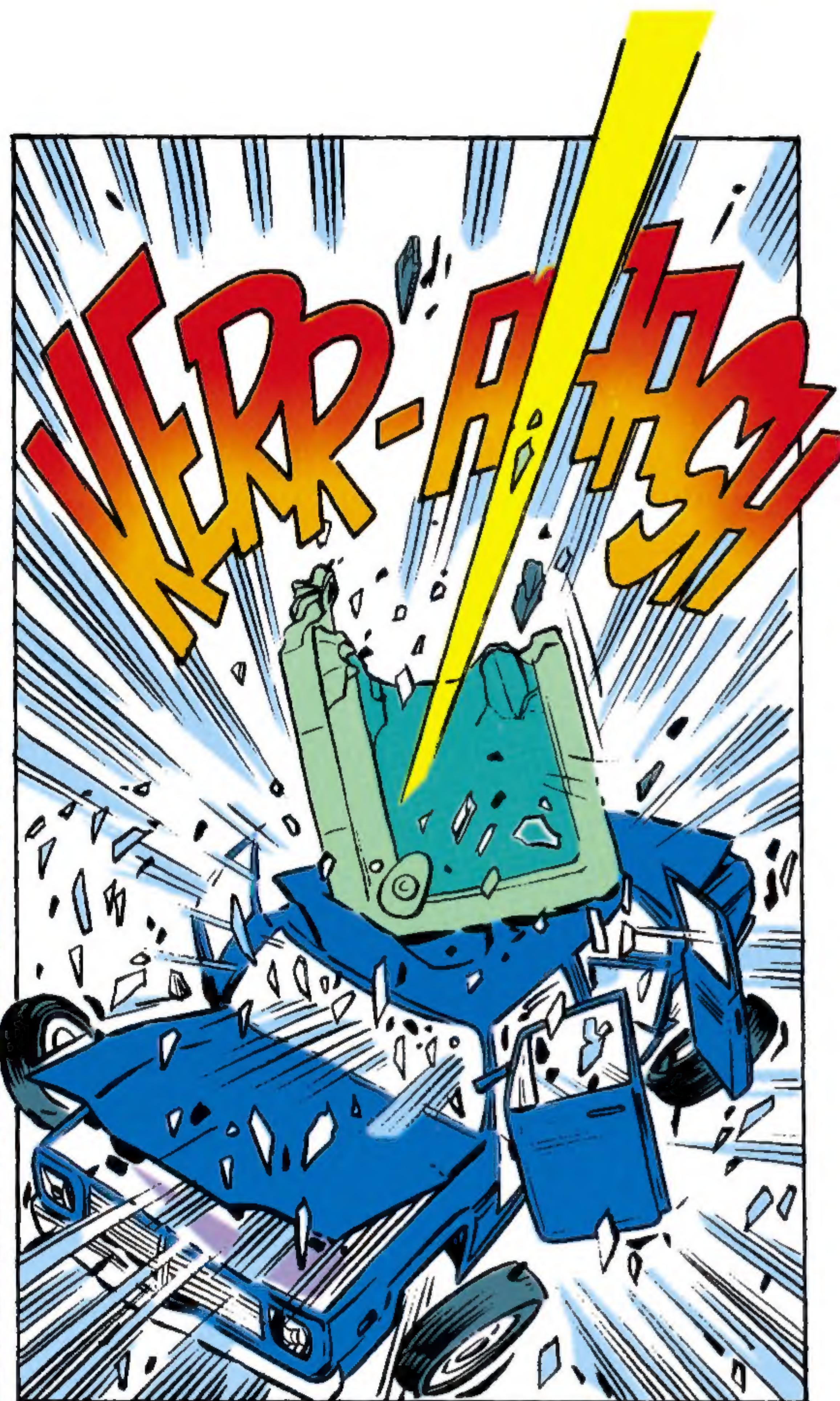
THAT WAS  
THEN.

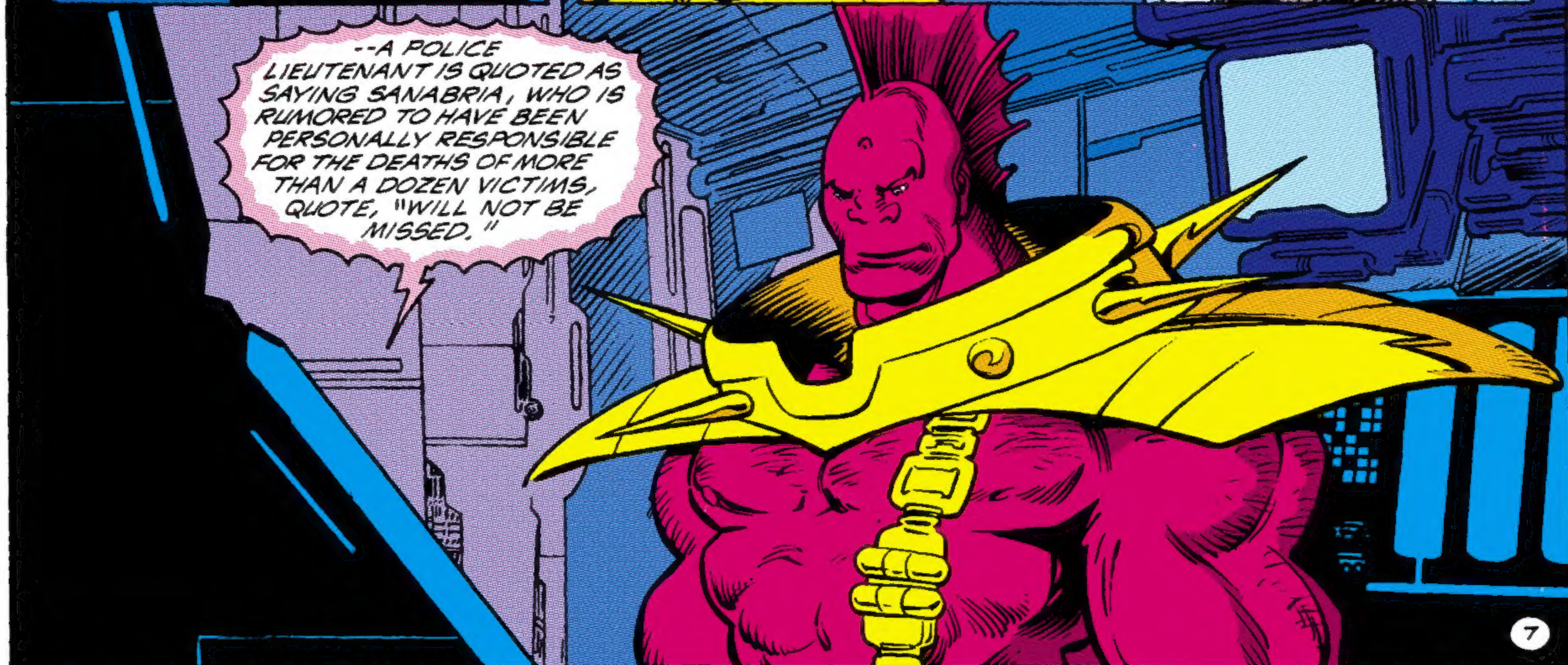
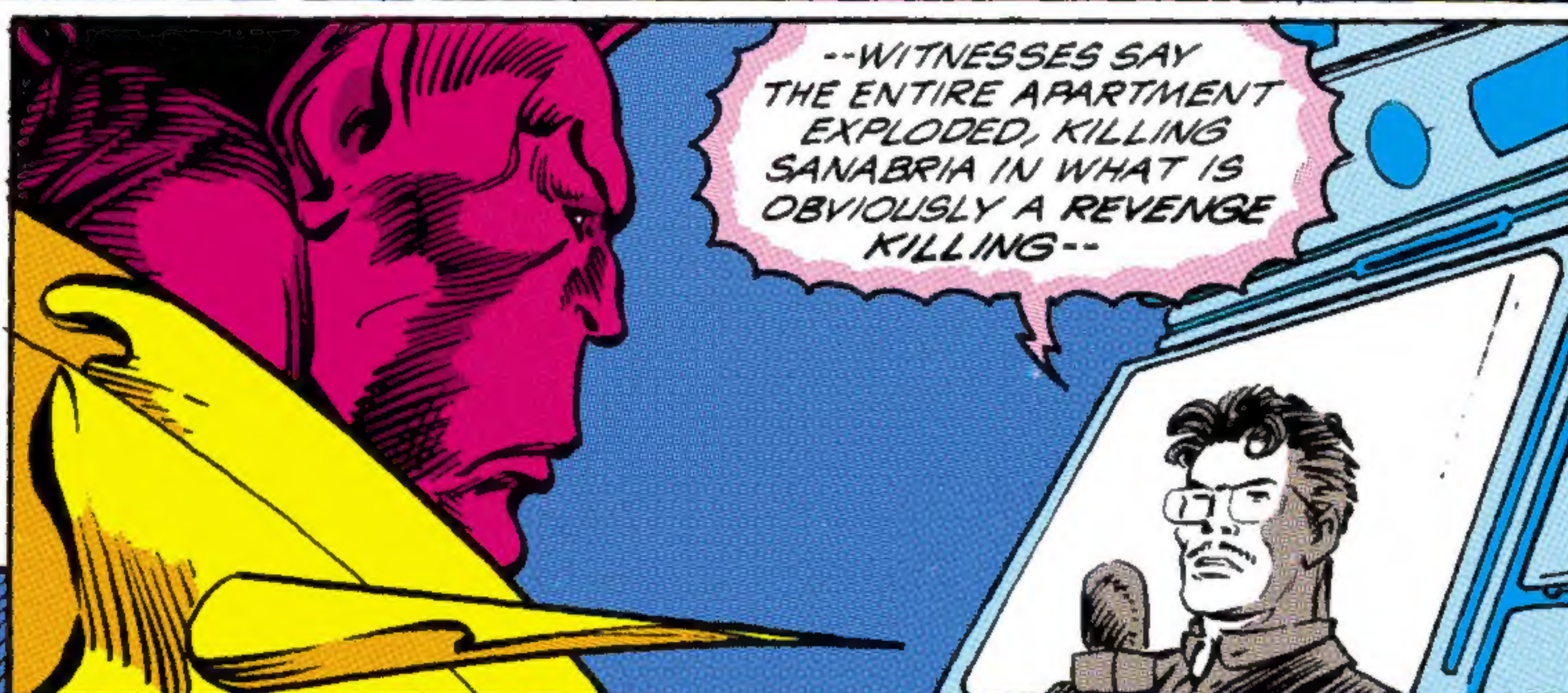
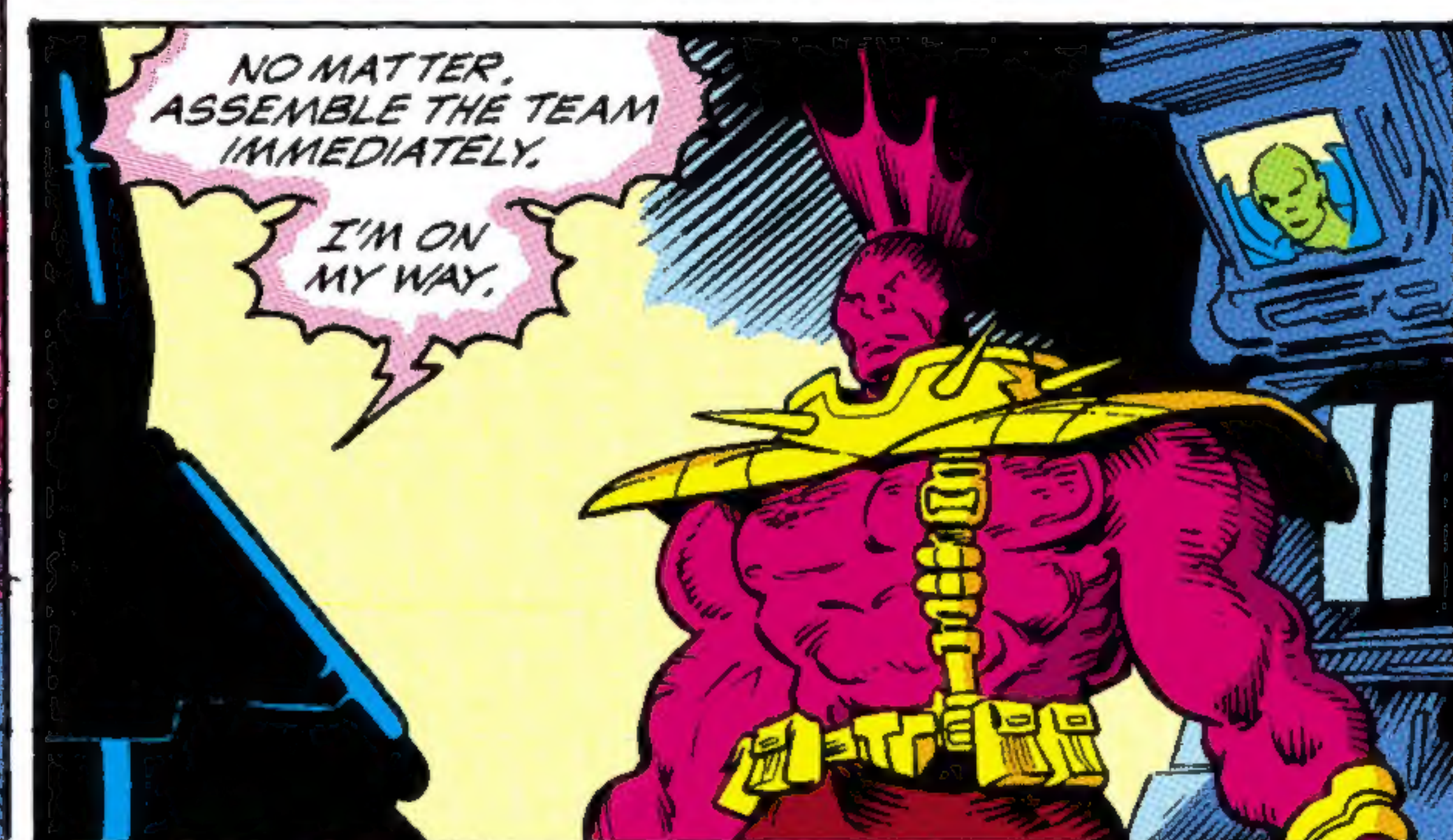
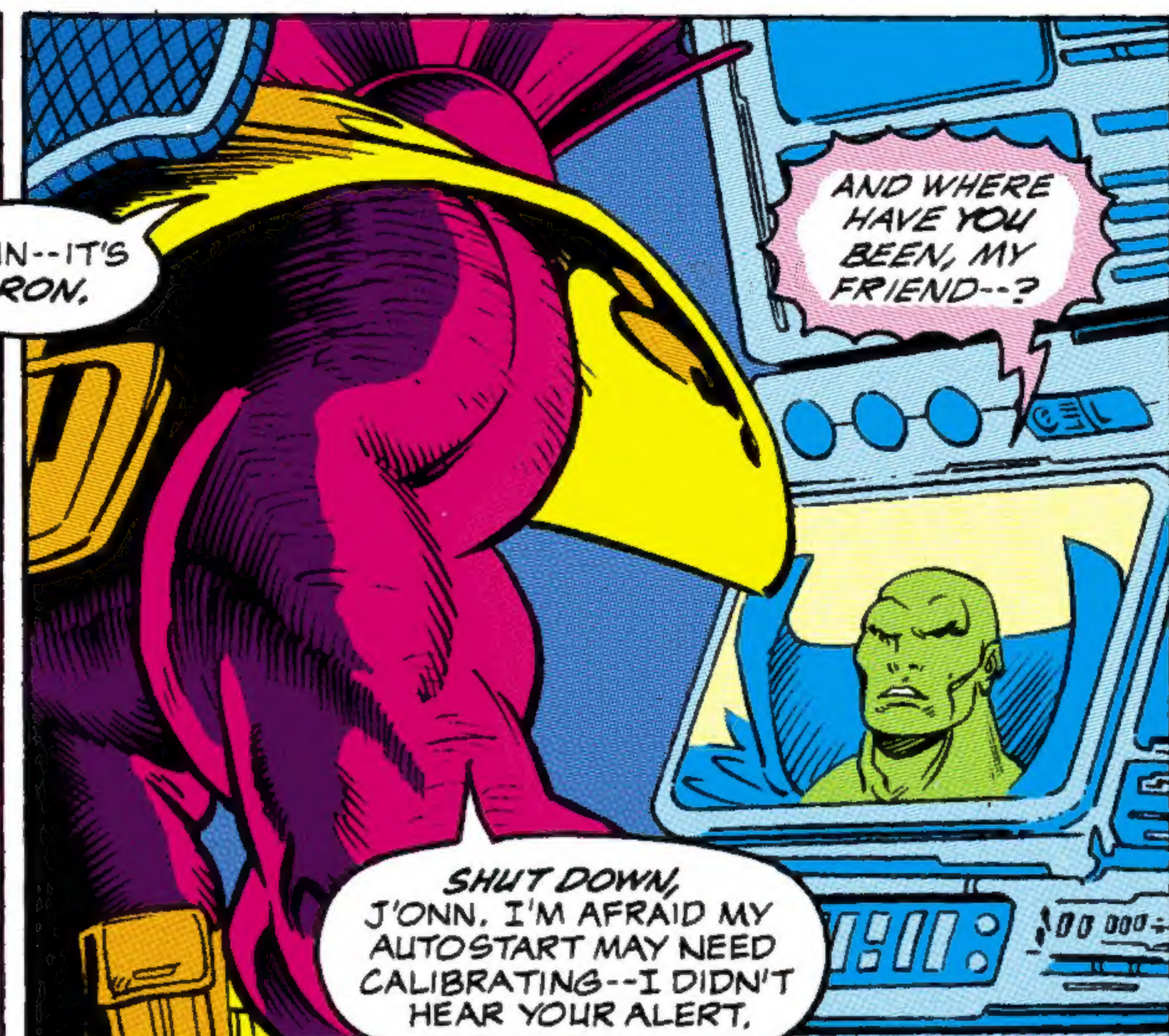
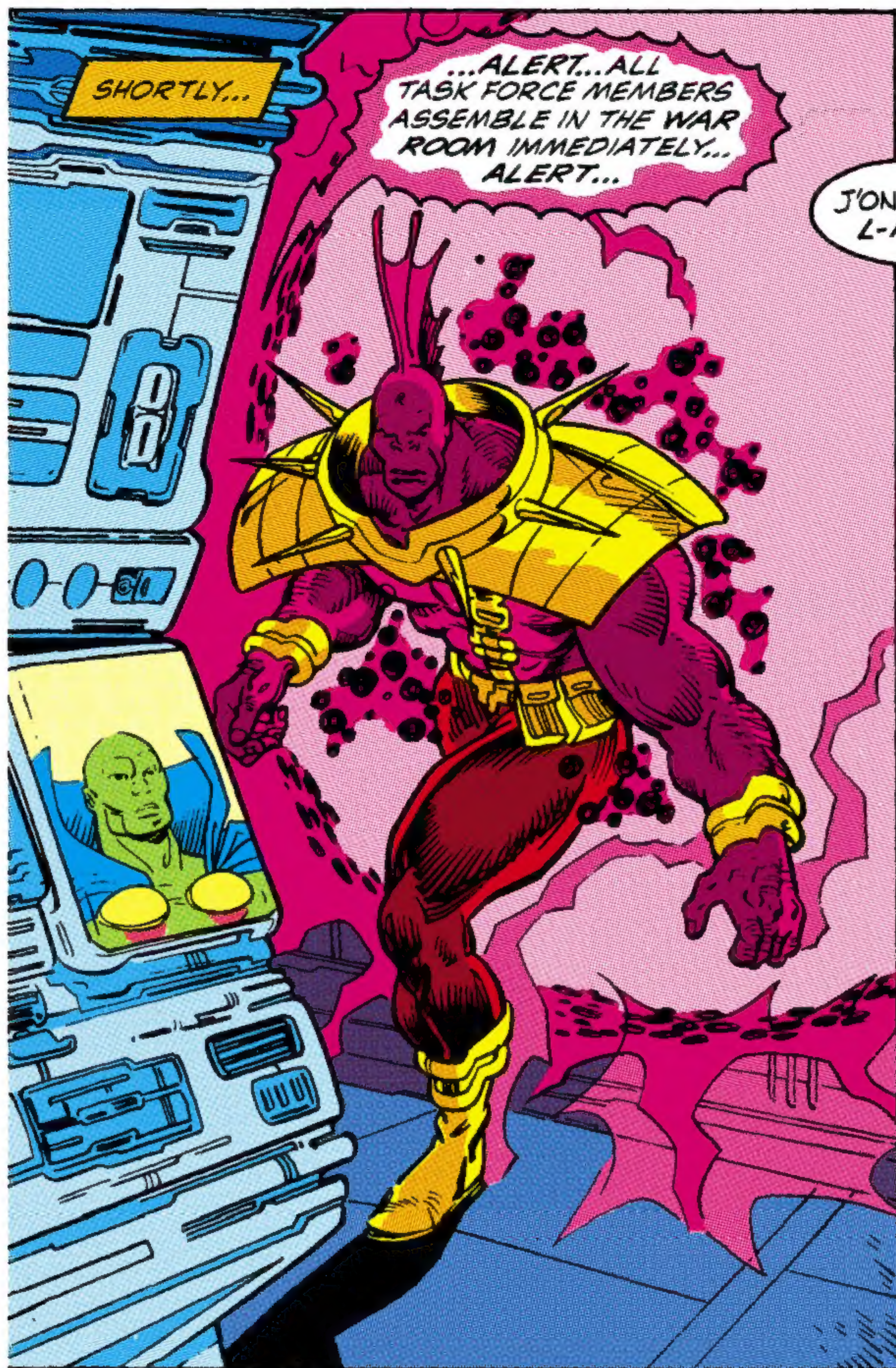


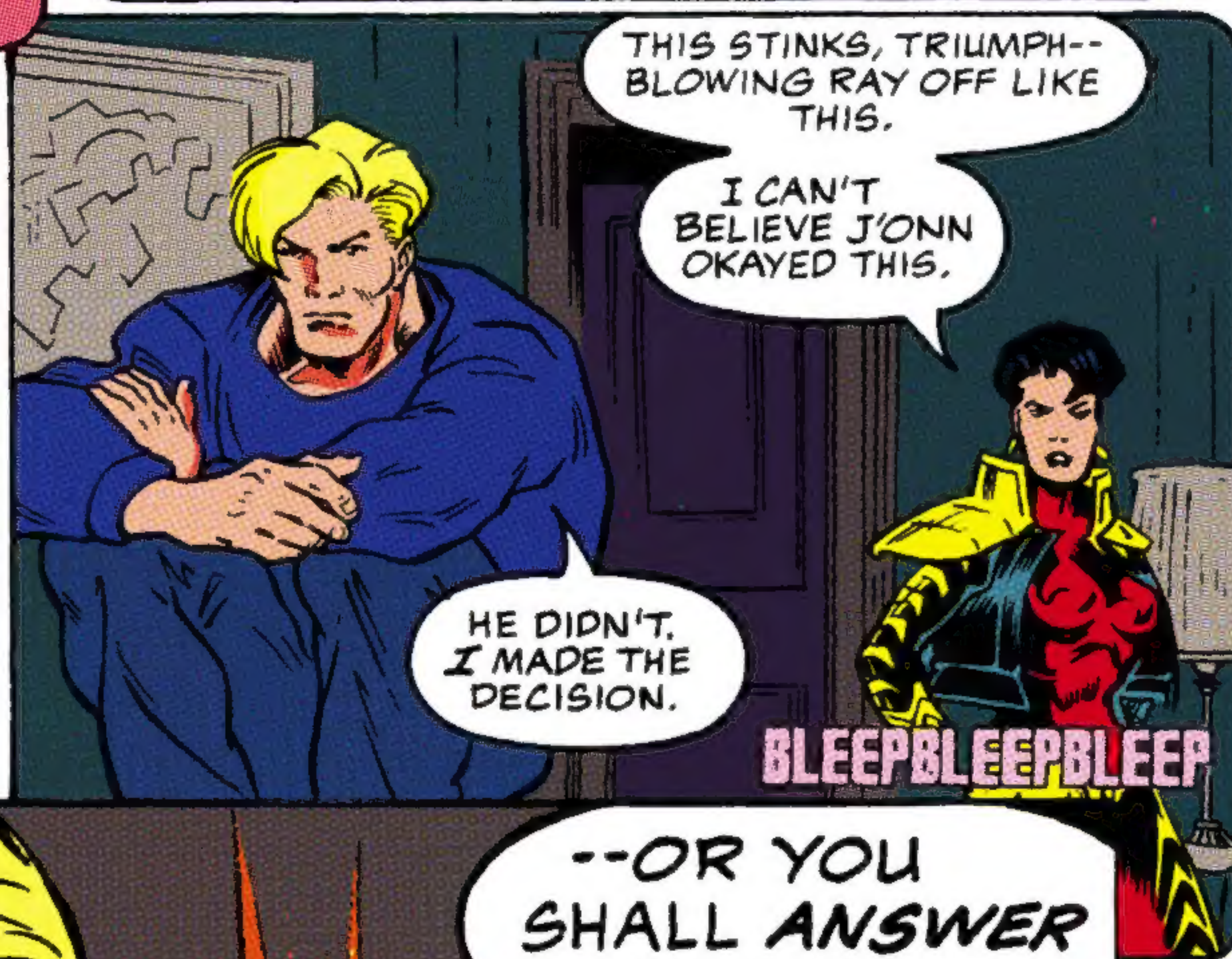
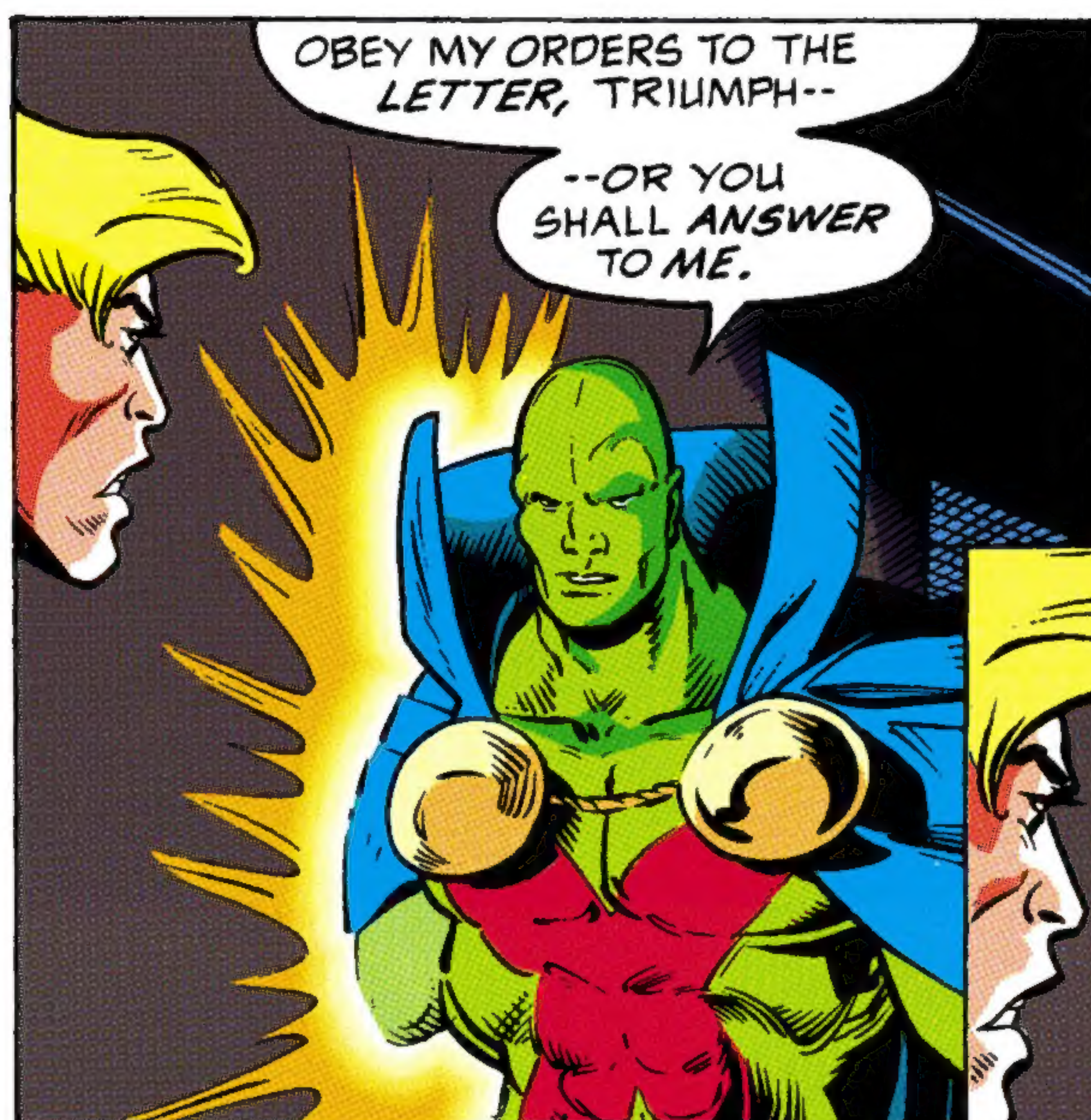


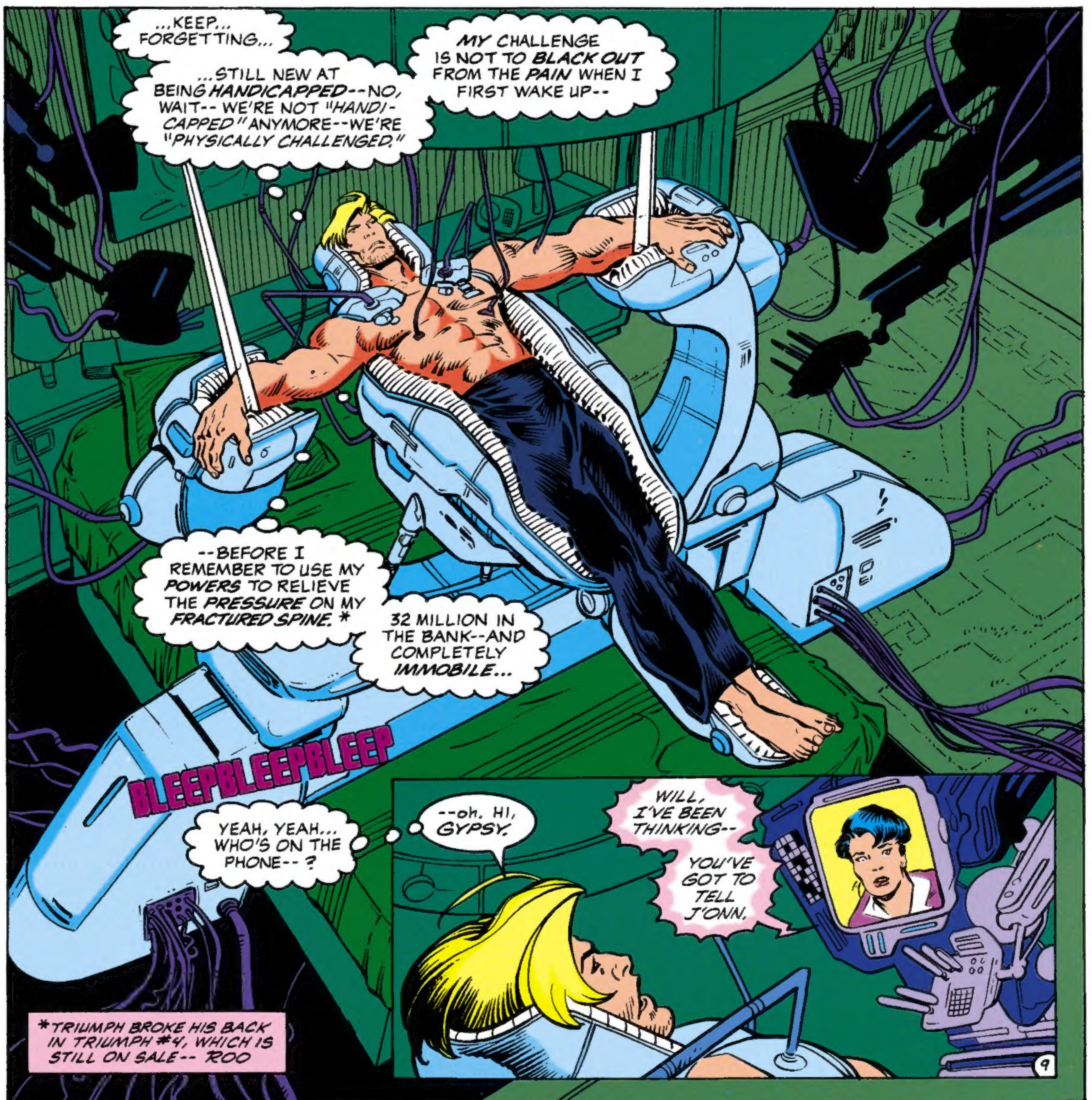
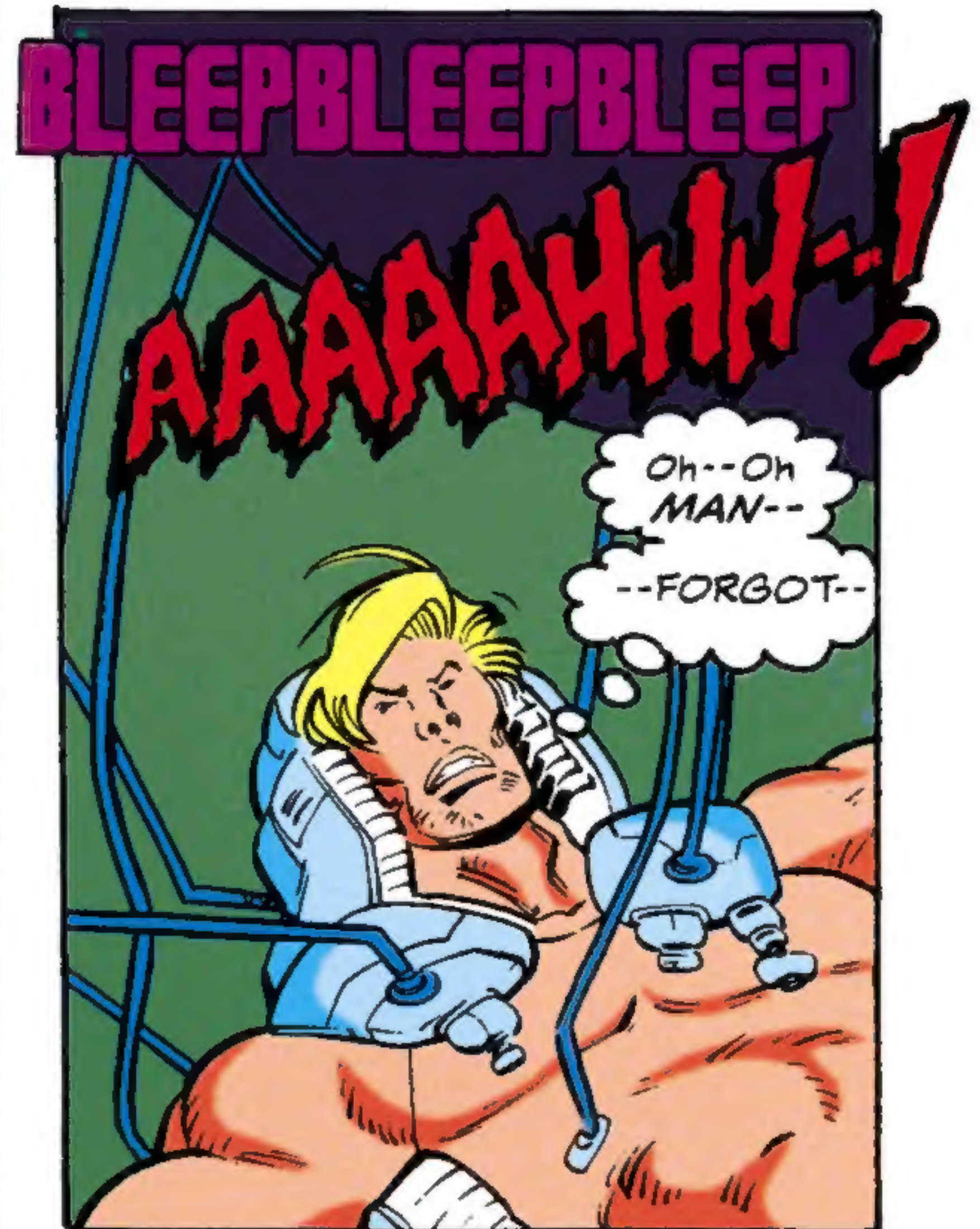
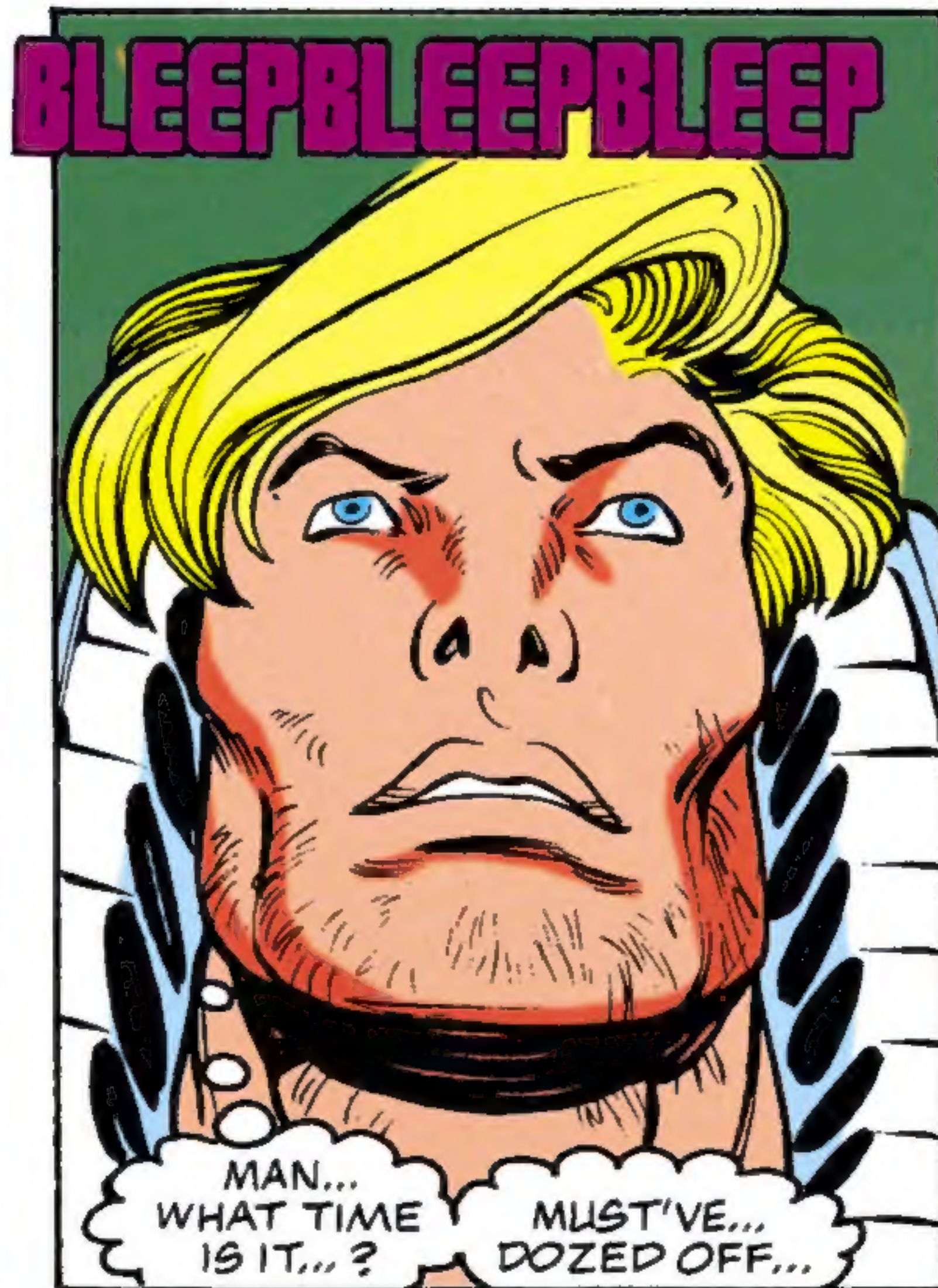














TELL J'ONN WHAT?

THAT YOU BLEW RAY OFF. THAT IT'S YOUR FAULT RAY'S WORKING FOR VANDAL SAVAGE.\*

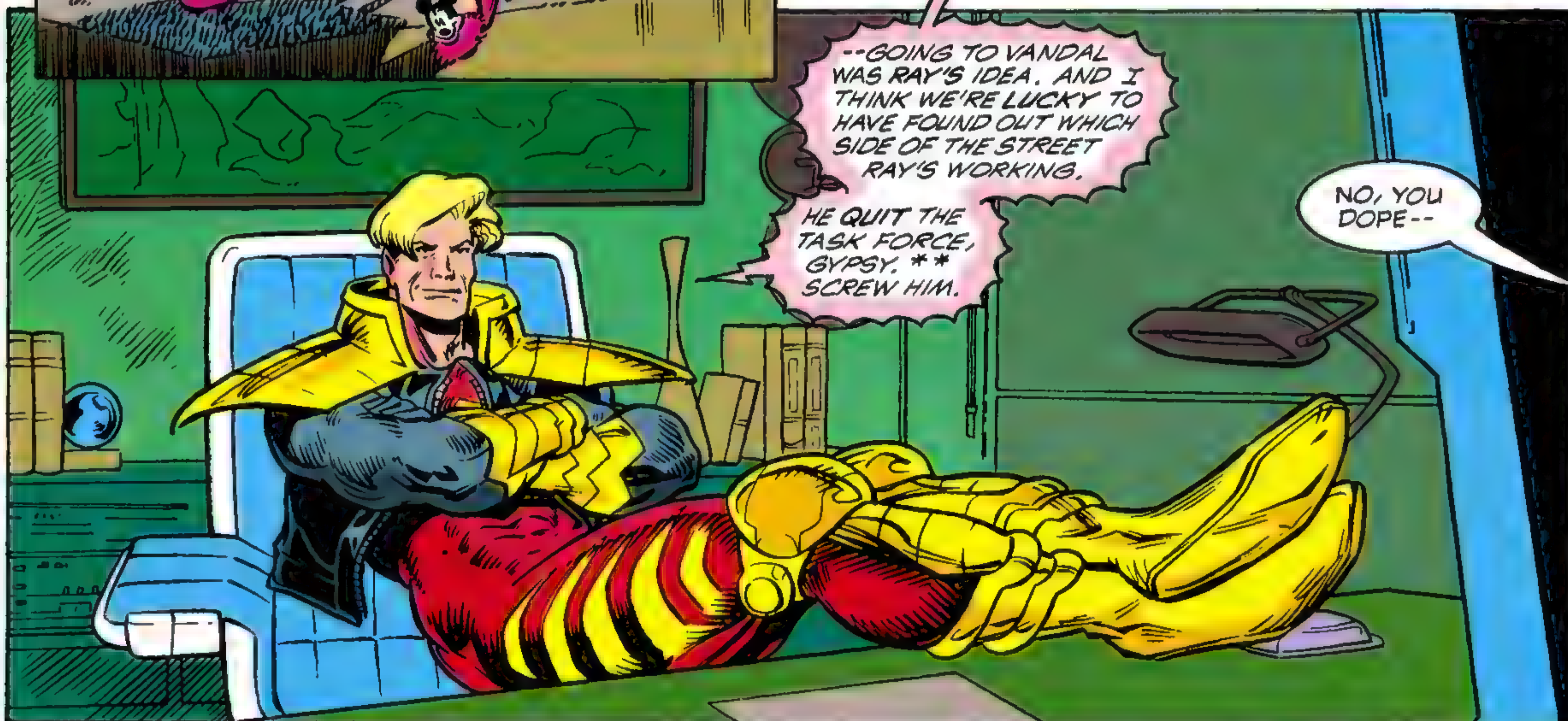


GYPSY-- THAT'S STUPID--

IS IT?

WILL, VANDAL SAVAGE HATES J'ONN-- HE'D STOP AT NOTHING TO GET HIS REVENGE-- INCLUDING HURTING RAY!

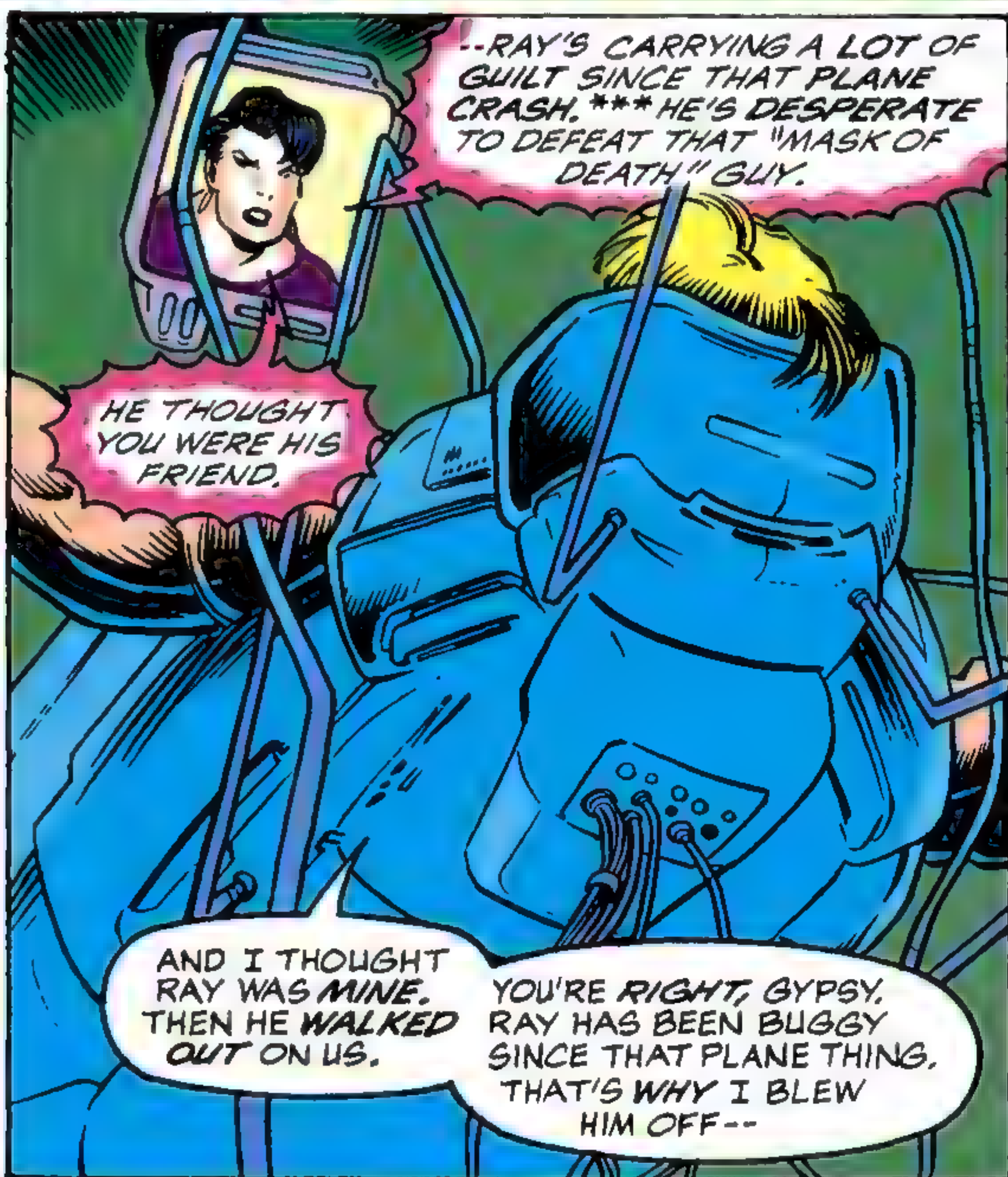
GYPSY--



--GOING TO VANDAL WAS RAY'S IDEA. AND I THINK WE'RE LUCKY TO HAVE FOUND OUT WHICH SIDE OF THE STREET RAY'S WORKING.

HE QUIT THE TASK FORCE, GYPSY. \*\* SCREW HIM.

NO, YOU DOPE--



--RAY'S CARRYING A LOT OF GUILT SINCE THAT PLANE CRASH. \*\*\* HE'S DESPERATE TO DEFEAT THAT "MASK OF DEATH" GUY.

HE THOUGHT YOU WERE HIS FRIEND.

AND I THOUGHT RAY WAS MINE. THEN HE WALKED OUT ON US.

YOU'RE RIGHT, GYPSY. RAY HAS BEEN BUGGY SINCE THAT PLANE THING. THAT'S WHY I BLEW HIM OFF--

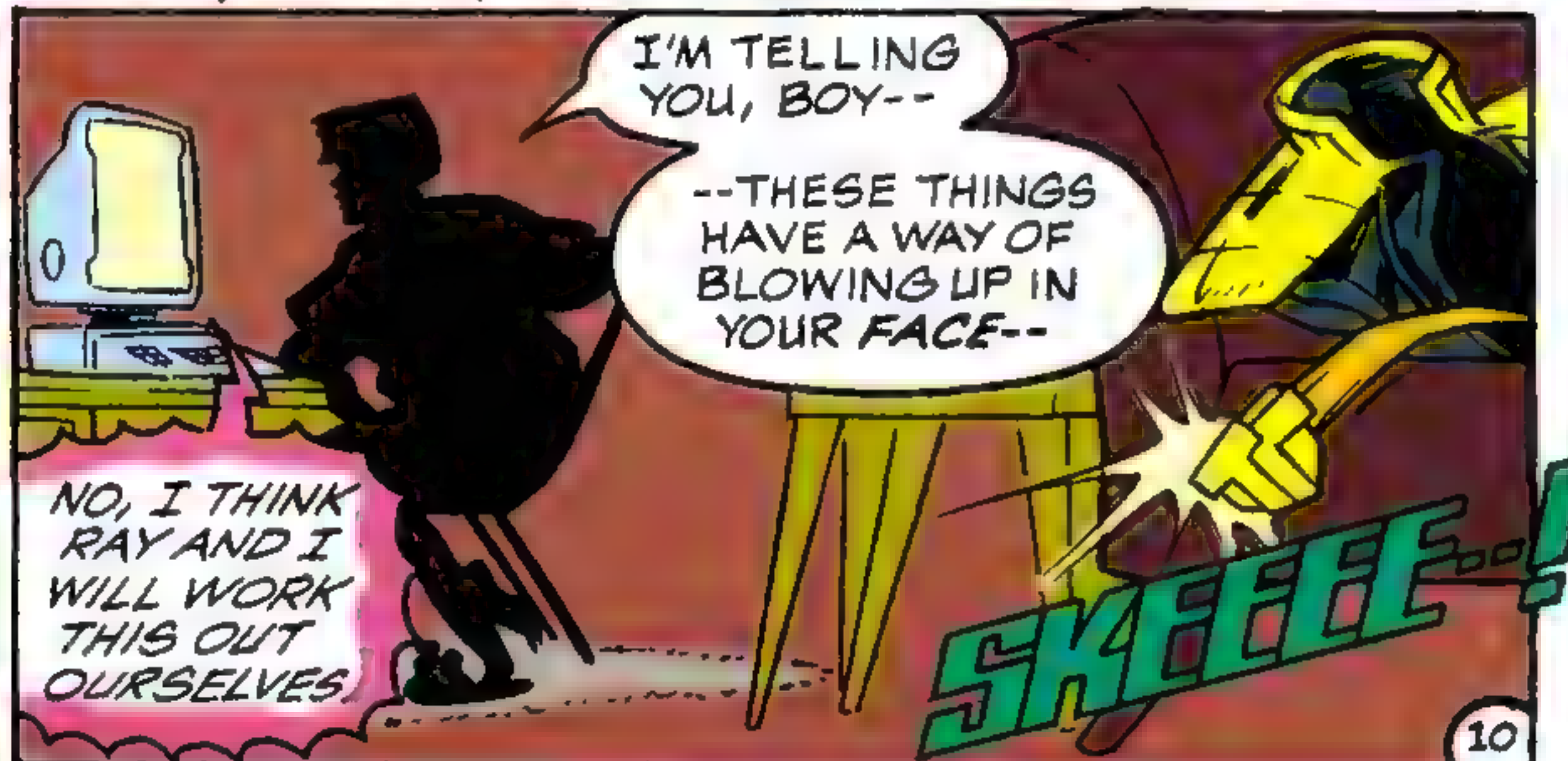


--I HAD TO FIND OUT JUST HOW BUGGY RAY IS. NOW WE KNOW.

RAY IS UNHINGED... DANGEROUS. AND I THINK IT'S BETTER WE FOUND OUT.

YOU'VE GOTTA TELL J'ONN, WILL.

\*RAY#14, \*\*TF#26, \*\*\*RAY ANNUAL#1-- CONTINUITY TOO



I'M TELLING YOU, BOY--

--THESE THINGS HAVE A WAY OF BLOWING UP IN YOUR FACE--

NO, I THINK RAY AND I WILL WORK THIS OUT OURSELVES.

SKEEEE--!

# CLEAR <sup>AND</sup> PRESENT DANGER

THE SHIPYARDS  
AT DARGATH,  
NEW RIIHAD.

DUSK.

THE MAN'S NAME IS  
DEATH MASQUE.

HE IS THE DE-FACTO  
RULER OF NEW RIIHAD,  
A POSTAGE-STAMP  
NATION IN NORTH  
AFRICA.

DEATH MASQUE IS A  
DESTROYER. A SLAYER.  
A RUTHLESS, MERCILESS  
DEMON POSSESSED OF  
VAST AND TERRIBLE  
POWERS.

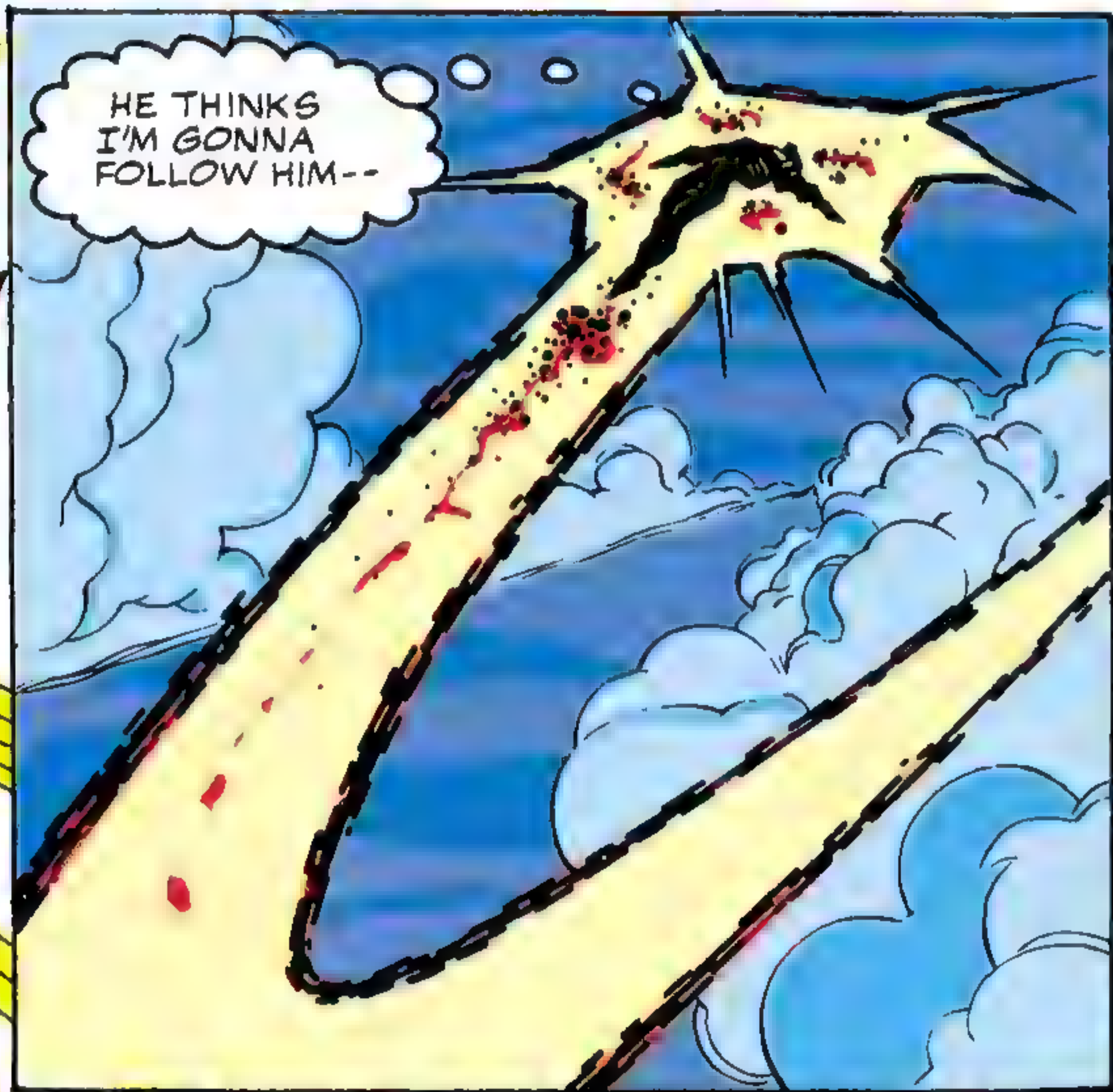
RAY BOUGHT HIM FROM  
CIRCUIT SHACK FOR \$65  
PLUS TWO SHACK  
ATTACK COUPONS.

GOOD.

VERY  
GOOD.

PRIEST ▼ WRITER RAMONBERNADO ▼ PENCILLER C.WALLACE & D.CRAMER ▼ INKER ADRIENNEROY ▼ COLORIST  
KEVINCUNNINGHAM ▼ LETTERER ALISANDEMORALES ▼ ASS'T ED. RUBENDIAZ ▼ EDITOR

COVER BY DAVE JOHNSON & RICH FABER, COLORED BY JEAN SEGARRA





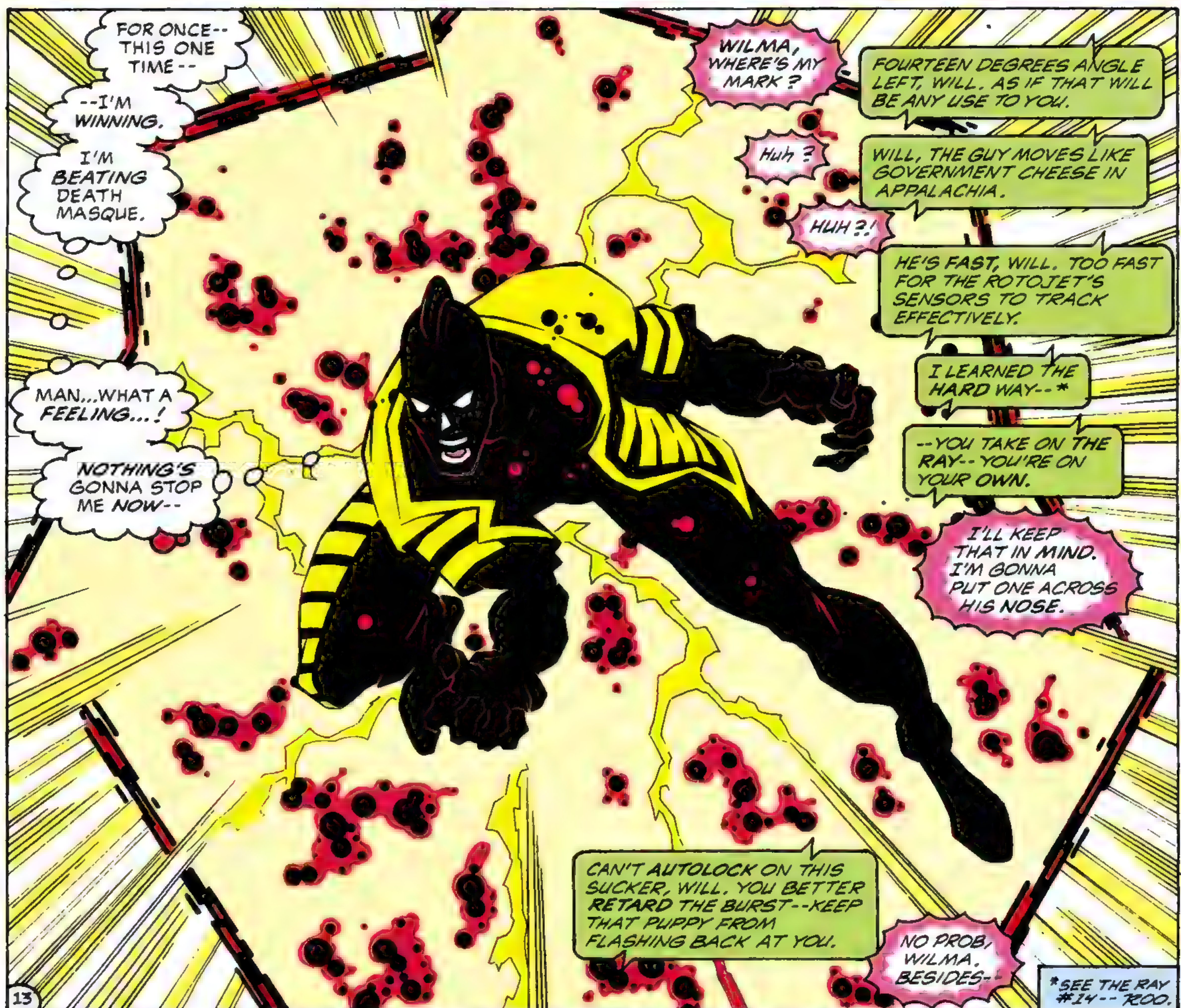
IN FACT, MAYBE FOR THE FIRST TIME--



--I'VE MADE THE MONSTER THINK.



FOR ONCE, HE'S NOT RUNNING RINGS AROUND ME.



FOR ONCE-- THIS ONE TIME--

--I'M WINNING.

I'M BEATING DEATH MASQUE.

MAN...WHAT A FEELING...!

NOTHING'S GONNA STOP ME NOW--

WILMA, WHERE'S MY MARK?

Huh?

HUH?!

FOURTEEN DEGREES ANGLE LEFT, WILL. AS IF THAT WILL BE ANY USE TO YOU.

WILL, THE GUY MOVES LIKE GOVERNMENT CHEESE IN APPALACHIA.

HE'S FAST, WILL. TOO FAST FOR THE ROTOJET'S SENSORS TO TRACK EFFECTIVELY.

I LEARNED THE HARD WAY--\*

--YOU TAKE ON THE RAY-- YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.

I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND. I'M GONNA PUT ONE ACROSS HIS NOSE.

CAN'T AUTOLOCK ON THIS SUCKER, WILL. YOU BETTER RETARD THE BURST--KEEP THAT PUPPY FROM FLASHING BACK AT YOU.

NO PROB, WILMA. BESIDES--

\*SEE THE RAY #14-- R.O.O.



--I JUST WANT  
TO GET HIS  
ATTENTION.

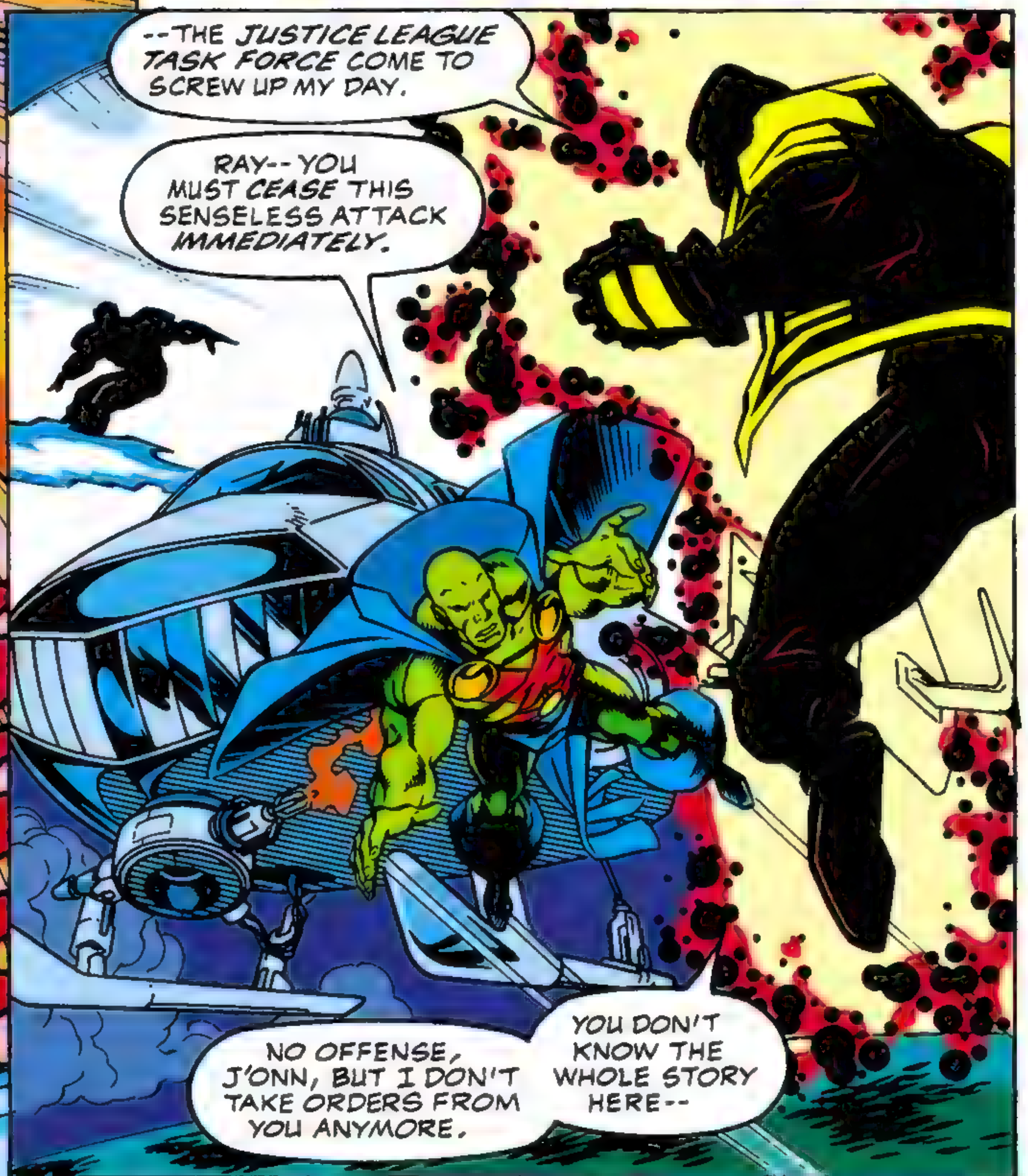
WGHNN!!!



Oh.

I SEE.

THIS  
IS WHERE  
WE'RE  
GOING--



--THE JUSTICE LEAGUE  
TASK FORCE CAME TO  
SCREW UP MY DAY.

RAY-- YOU  
MUST CEASE THIS  
SENSELESS ATTACK  
IMMEDIATELY.

NO OFFENSE,  
J'ONN, BUT I DON'T  
TAKE ORDERS FROM  
YOU ANYMORE.

YOU DON'T  
KNOW THE  
WHOLE STORY  
HERE--



THAT WAS  
NOT A  
REQUEST.



Uh-oh.

LOSING IT.

NUTS...  
NUTS...



DON'T KNOW WHAT  
J'ONN'S MARTIAN VISION  
IS MADE OF--

HEY, MR.  
MAN-- GOT  
SOMETHING  
FOR YOU.

--NO-- THAT  
MYSTEK KID--



TRIUMPH--

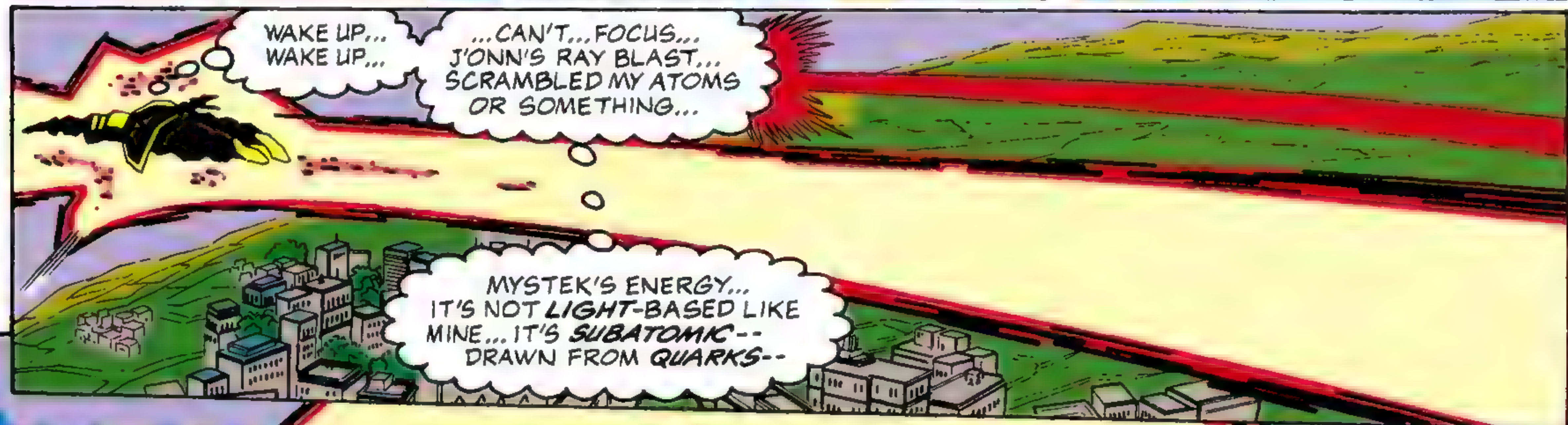
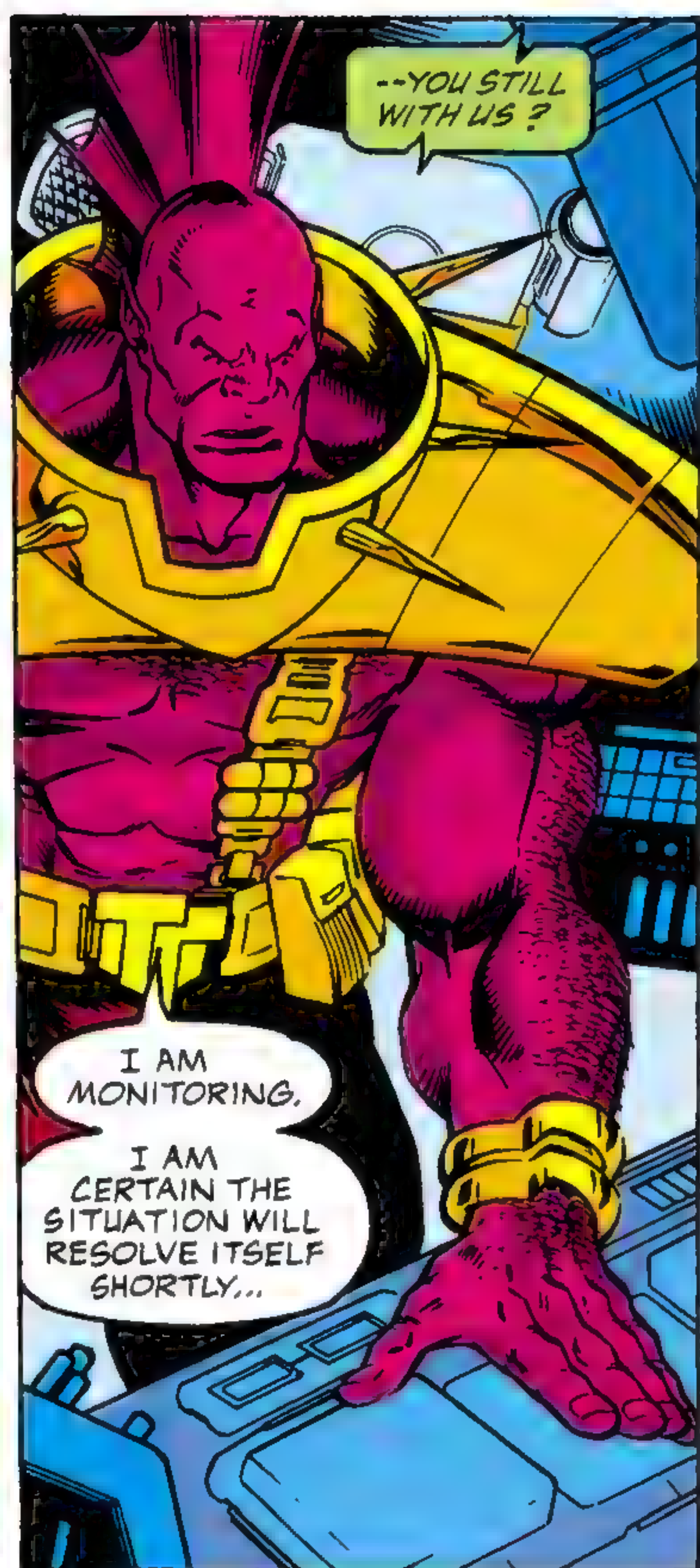
BETTER  
PUNCH IT--

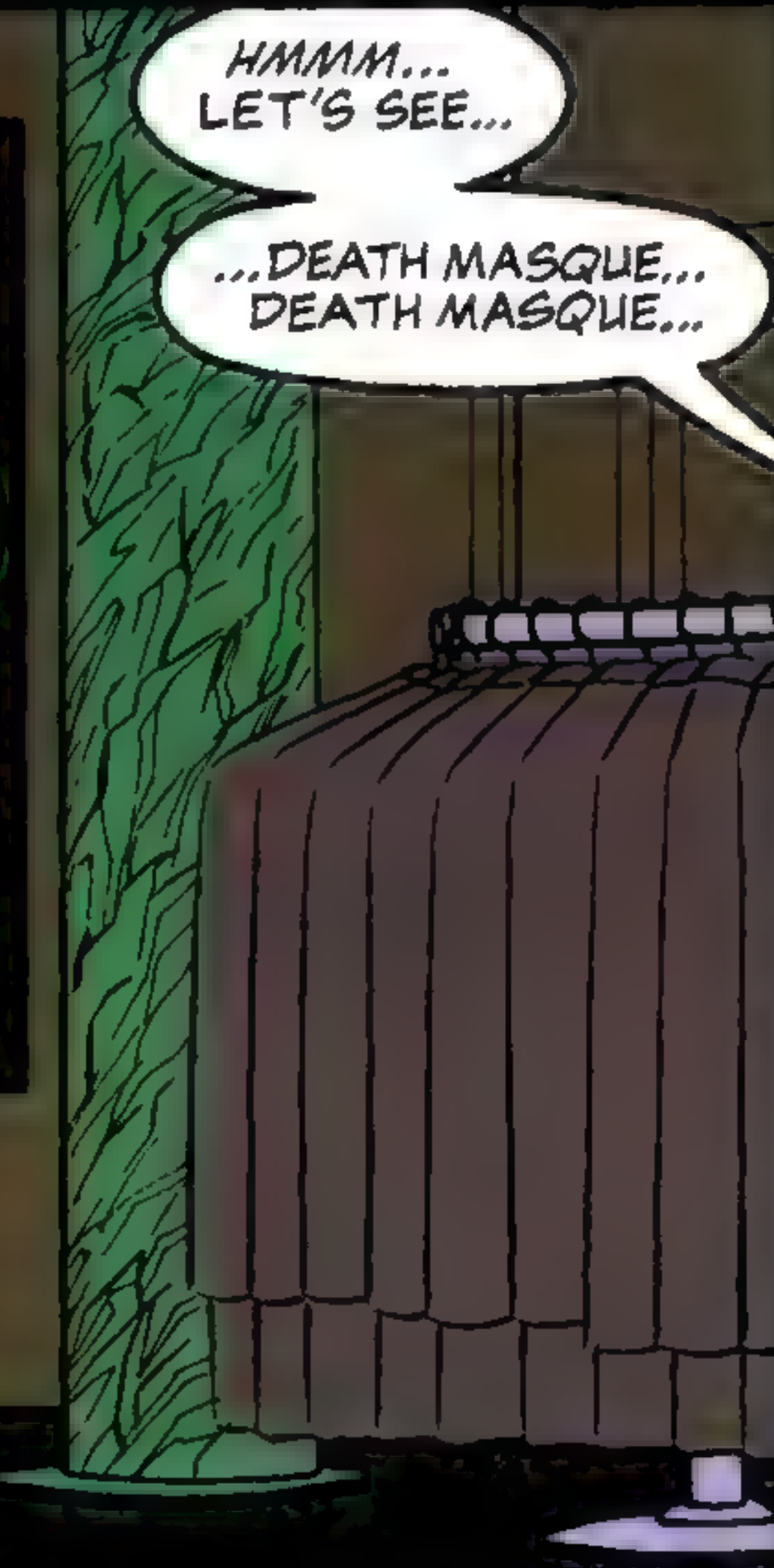
--RAY'S  
ON THE  
MOVE.

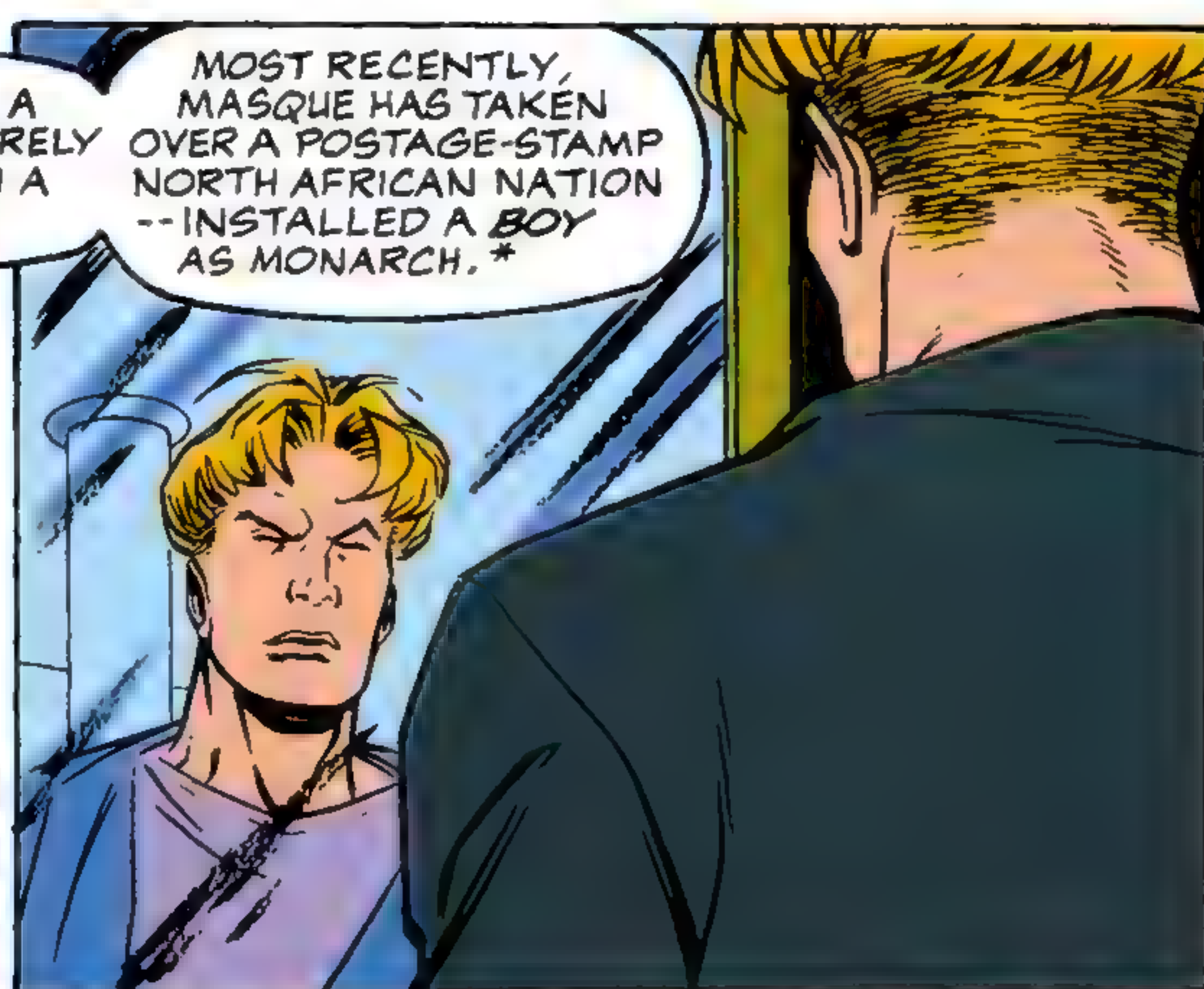
WILMA--  
WHERE'S MY  
MARK?

YOU'RE  
JOKING,  
RIGHT?

WILL--







\*RAY#13--200





--IS TO STOP BEING MYSELF. TO MOVE BEYOND DEATH MASQUE'S RANGE OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION.

KEEP HIM ON THE DEFENSIVE.

I HAVE SEEN THIS "DEATH MASQUE."



Y-YOU HAVE--?

IN PHILADELPHIA --AT THE CRASH SITE.

HE VANISHED WITHOUT COMMENT OR INCIDENT. \*

\*LAST ISH--ROO



GET OVER THERE, WILL.

THAT'S YOUR MESS. FIX IT WHILE YOU STILL CAN.

THIS IS BORING. WHEN DO WE GET TO BEAT UP ON RAY AGAIN--?



AND *THIS* IS SAVAGE'S ADVICE--?

--DESTROY NEW RIIHAD'S SHIPYARDS? A CIVILIAN INDUSTRY POSING NO THREAT--?

IF YOU INVESTIGATE MORE CLOSELY, J'ONN, YOU'LL FIND OUT NEW RIIHAD'S PRIMARY EXPORT ISN'T SHIPS OR OIL--



--IT'S DRUGS.

THE RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS AND ELITE CLASS OF NEW RIIHAD ACCEPT *SUBSTANTIAL* HONORARIUMS FROM SOME OF THE GLOBE'S MOST RUTHLESS AND UNSAVORY CHARACTERS.

YES, THIS WILL BE FINE.



DESTROY NEW RIIHAD'S  
ILLICIT ECONOMY, AND YOU  
WILL DESTABILIZE THE AREA  
AND CREATE A DIVERSION  
MASQUE WILL NEED TO  
DEAL WITH.

ANY UNFORESEEN  
INITIATIVES ON YOUR  
PART WILL ACCRUE TO  
YOUR ADVANTAGE.

CORRUPT  
MASQUE'S  
INTERNAL  
LOGIC--

--AND  
HE'S  
YOURS.

YOUR ALLIANCE  
WITH VANDAL SAVAGE  
IS WHAT TROUBLES  
ME MOST, RAY--

--HIS  
MOTIVES ARE  
HIGHLY  
SUSPECT.

I NEEDED HELP,  
J'ONN. SOMEBODY  
WHO COULD *OUTPLAN*  
DEATH MASQUE.

AFTER TRIUMPH  
TURNED ME DOWN,  
IT DAWNED ON ME  
THAT I DON'T WANT  
TO PUT ANY OF MY  
FRIENDS IN THE  
LINE OF FIRE.

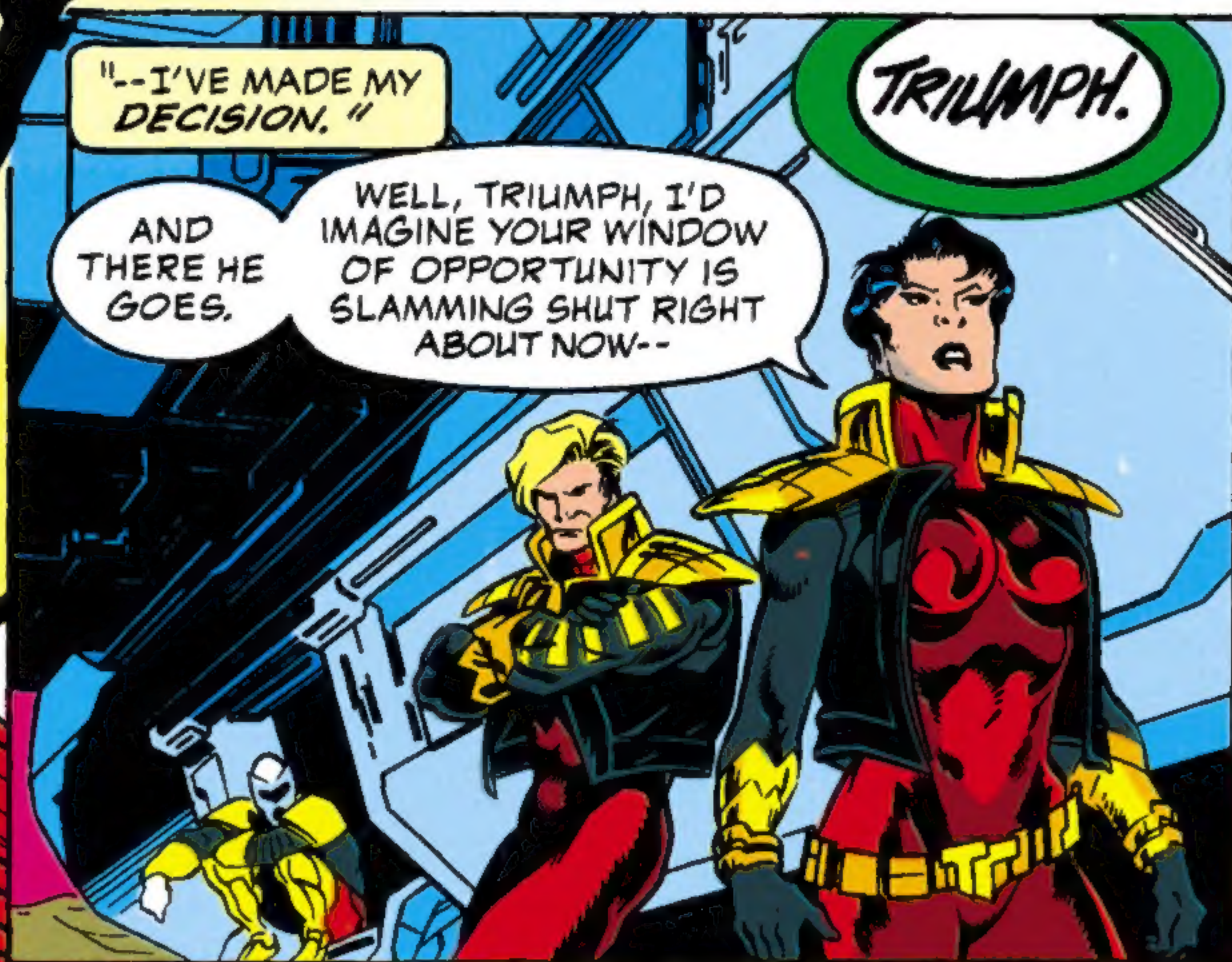


I MEAN, IF  
MASQUE WHACKS  
SAVAGE-- WHO'LL  
CARE?

LOOK-- I'M  
SORRY IF YOU  
DON'T APPROVE,  
J'ONN.

WE CAN  
FIGHT ALL DAY  
ABOUT THIS--

--OR YOU  
CAN TRUST  
ME, IN ANY  
CASE--



"--I'VE MADE MY  
DECISION."

AND  
THERE HE  
GOES.

WELL, TRIUMPH, I'D  
IMAGINE YOUR WINDOW  
OF OPPORTUNITY IS  
SLAMMING SHUT RIGHT  
ABOUT NOW--

TRIUMPH.

WHA--?

--J'ONN--  
ARE YOU  
NUTS--?

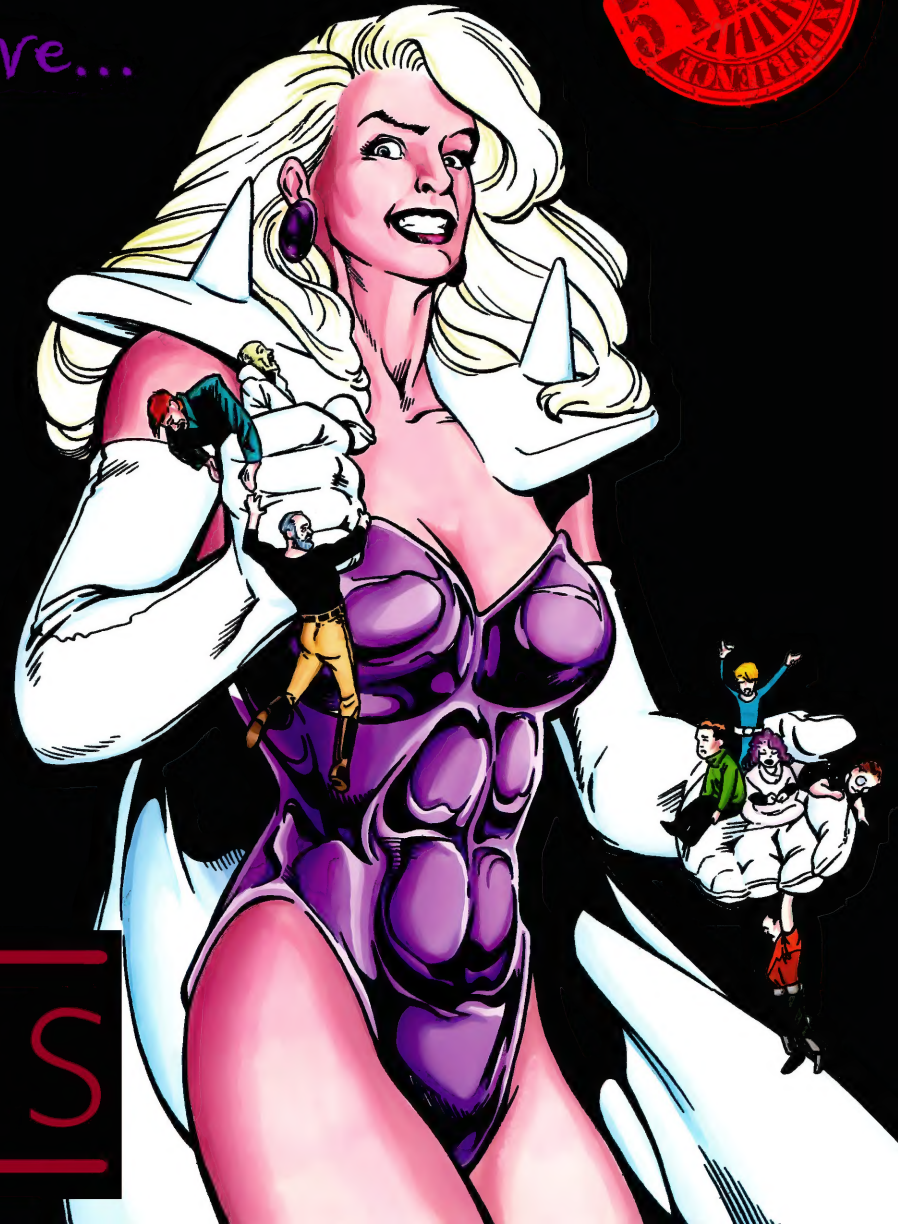
TRIUMPH,  
I'VE WARNED YOU  
REPEATEDLY ABOUT  
YOUR IMPULSIVE  
AND RECKLESS  
ACTIONS.

I HAVE  
EXHAUSTED ALL  
AVENUES OF  
PERSUASION--

--SAVE  
ONE...

NEXT-- **INNOCENT**  
(DEATH TAKES A COFFEE BREAK)

*From Baaldur, with love...*



GLORITH

NOVUS